Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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**OPINION METER**

This week's poll:
**New Year's Eve celebration: Eat out or stay in?**

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**Hmong Relocation**

Thailand has launched an operation to close a refugee camp and send some 4,000 Hmong back to Laos.

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**New Taurus**

The new Taurus SHO differs from the old in that the new is full-size and leans more toward luxury.

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**Sensual CD**

Robin Thicke says guys have to think beyond the bedroom if they want to keep a woman happy.

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## 43 candidates rush to beat filing deadline

## 'Quite a few' ask for an extension

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At least 43 or a big bulk of the 110 candidates who ran in the Nov. 7 general elections rushed to beat yesterday's deadline for filing their campaign statement of account with the Office of the Public Auditor.

Among the last-minute filers were former independent gubernatorial

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## Some Head Start kids show elevated lead levels in blood

**RELATED NEWS**

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By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Five percent of students tested for lead at CNMI Head Start Centers were found with elevated levels of lead in their blood, based on results submitted by the Head Start program to the Board of Education.

A total of 337 children were tested for lead, said program director Kathleen

*See HEAD START on Page 4*

# To date, CNMI draws down $12M of $97M ARRA funds

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

**ON THE NET**

- www.recovery.gov

Ada

The CNMI has so far drawn down at least $12 million of the estimated $97 million in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding awarded to all Commonwealth agencies, Commerce Secretary Michael Ada told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

For the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2010 alone, the CNMI has drawn down $7.6 million, Ada said.

He said the CNMI government asked for the $7.6 million to be drawn down on Dec. 11, and

*See ARRA on Page 4*

## 'Accounting' of alien workers ends today

### No word whether there will be extension

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman's "accounting" process for alien workers in the CNMI will end today, Tuesday.

It was not clear whether there will be an extension in the submission of registration forms after today. *Saipan Tribune* tried to reach Ombudsman Pamela Brown yesterday afternoon for information, but she was not

*See ALIEN on Page 4*

**CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

Acting Gov. Eloy S. Inos, back row, joins some 30 Koblerville Elementary School students and glee club coordinator Karen Alla right after they sang Christmas carols, which moved the crowd that gathered in the lobby of the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon. The KES students won the Dec. 19 Christmas in the Marianas caroling contest at the American Memorial Park.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

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# Local

# Proposed enrollment expansion for Head Start nixed

## 108 children still on wait list

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

There's no chance more students will be accommodated under the Head Start program this school year after the federal government junked the proposed enrollment expansion submitted by the CNMI.

Program director Kathleen Keiko Yamagata confirmed this with the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, saying the application proposing to use a portion of the stimulus funds for the expansion plan was rejected.

Yamagata said the application submitted in July wanted to add 34 more children in the program.

"We submitted the application to extend 34 more kids to the program…but we didn't get the approval," she said.

At present, the CNMI Head Start program is allowed to enroll only 462 children every program year, based on the federal assistance allocated for the program's personnel and operation.

The CNMI Head Start is a federally funded program under the Department of Health and Human Services, which provides developmental services for low-income children ages 3 to 5 and social services for their families.

Since two years ago, the funded enrollment figure for Head Start dropped from 579 to 462 due to a reduction in the funding allotment for the program. Every year, the program get $1.7 million in federal funds. However, its local matching fund decreased from almost $700,000 to just $350,000.

To date, there are a total of 108 children on the program's wait list, Yamagata said.

The number could have gone as high as 133 if not for some students that left the program in previous months. Yamagata said it is only in cases when students leave the program that those on the wait list are accepted, based on who is the next most eligible in line.

At the start of the school year, Yamagata said they only had 84 on the wait list. The number jumped to 108 as of yesterday.

When asked for the reason behind the lengthening number of children on the wait list, Yamagata said more and more children are turning 3 years old and are applying to enroll in Head Start.

### '25 kids withdrew in 2 months'

Public School System records indicate that 25 Head Start students withdrew from the program in two months.

Yamagata confirmed that 19 kids withdraw in September while six left in October. In November, the program had zero withdrawals.

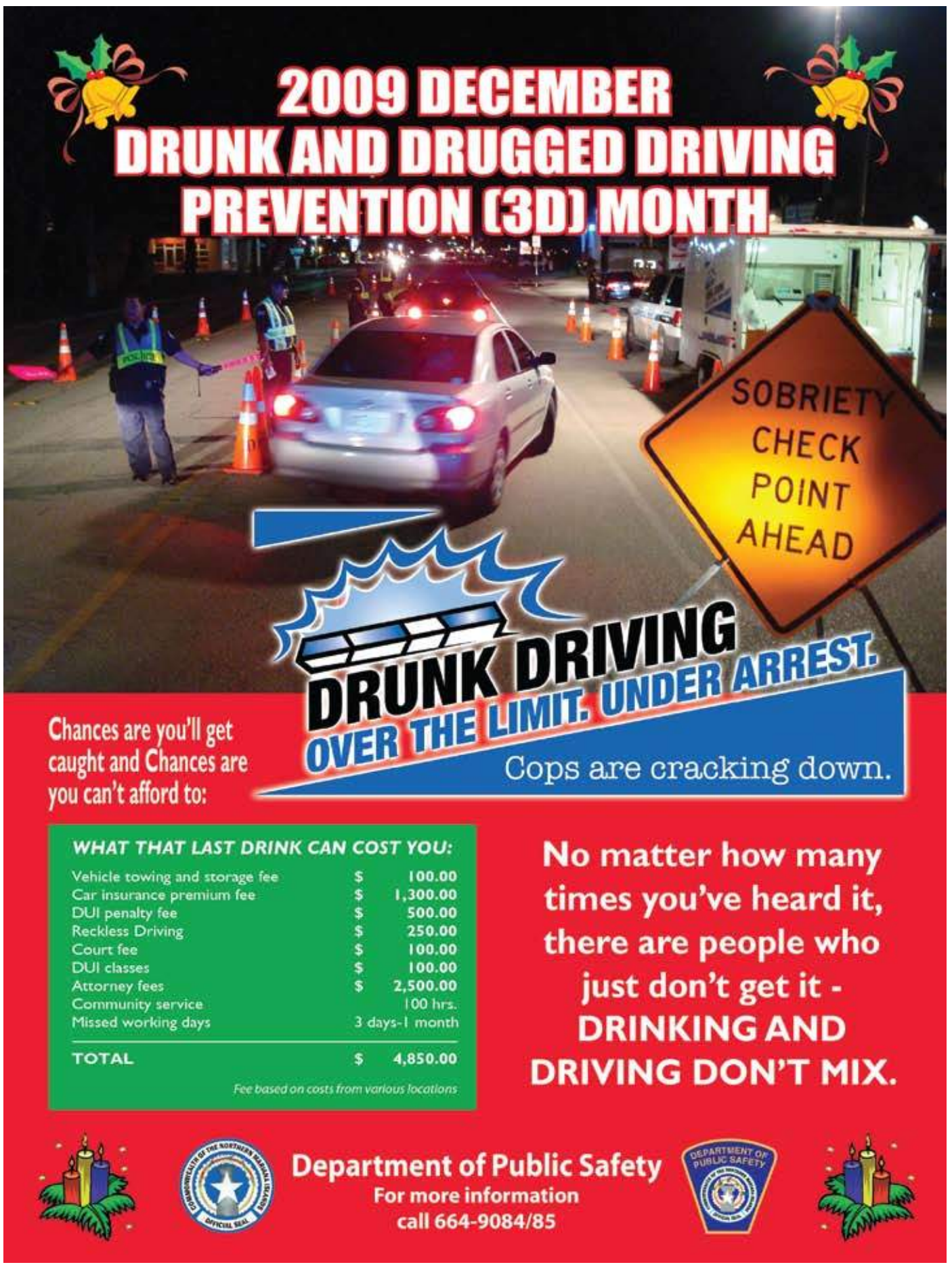
Of the 19 withdrawals in October, nine entered kindergarten, one moved off island, and 10 transferred to full-day care at private centers.

The program currently administers two sessions each in the morning and afternoon, both lasting three and a half hours.

Yamagata said the Head Start regional office is considering changing the sessions into full-day instructions for all centers in the CNMI.

She said they were asked to assess and obtain data on this issue.

"The regional office would like us to really carefully look at the data…because they understand the need of working parents. The data will be incorporated in our community assessment and we plan to have our first meeting in January," she said.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Tourism Tuesday

**A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority**

*Tourism is everybody's business.*

**What is a Marianas Visitors Authority Signature Event?**

MVA Signature Events are planned and coordinated year-after-year to help promote Saipan, Tinian and Rota with the goal of attracting more visitors. These signature events also provide an opportunity for the island community to interact with visitors, whether as competitors or volunteers. The MVA coordinates 11 such events each year, with the support of numerous private sponsors and other government offices.

**Don't miss these exciting MVA Signature Events in 2010!**

3rd Annual Marianas Coffee Trail Run (Jan. 23)
6th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival (Feb. 13-14)
2010 Winter Festival of Runs (March 6)
9th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship (March 13)
21st Annual Tagaman Triathlon (March 20)
12th Annual Taste of the Marianas Food Festival & Beer Garden (May)
11th Annual Tinian Turquoise Blue Triathlon and Reef Swim (June 5)
2nd Annual Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament (June 19)
17th Annual Rota Blue Triathlon (Nov. 13)
4th Annual Hell of the Marianas – Century Cycle (Dec. 4)
9th Annual Christmas in the Marianas (Dec. 18)

Learn more about the 2010 Signature Events at www.mymarianas.com.

HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY
MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

ON THE FIRST DAY OF OPEN VACCINATIONS

# DPH: 750 get H1N1 vaccines

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Health administered about 750 doses of the H1N1 vaccines on the first day it opened the campaign to the public last week, according to hospital epidemiologist Edward Diaz.

More community members are expected to avail of the free doses as the agency continues to provide the service, in collaboration with private health clinics.

"The first Saturday vaccination drive for the community was pretty successful. Close to 750 people were provided the doses and more are coming in to the clinic here and in the private [sector]," Diaz told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

DPH opened the vaccination to the public on Dec. 19.

Tinian and Rota were scheduled to begin the same vaccination drive yesterday.

Latest DPH numbers show that 62 percent of students in the Commonwealth have already been provided the H1N1 vaccines, ranging from kindergarten to high school, including all Head Start students.

An estimated 5,400-plus students in both private and public schools on three islands have already availed of the vaccines, either via shots or flu mists. This translates to 62 percent of the entire student population, which exceeds the target and expectation of the health department.

Compared to elementary schools, which recorded over 3,500 participants two weeks ago, health representatives noted some minor challenges in high schools due to the inoculation period falling on finals week.

The CNMI has been allocated 56,000 H1N1 vaccines for the three islands. The first shipment of the vaccines was provided to priority groups that included infants, pregnant women, and health care providers.

Some 19,000 additional doses are expected to arrive in the CNMI this month.

Health officials said during last week's news briefing that it is their goal to complete the vaccination program by the end of the year and to make sure the bulk of the community is inoculated before the seasonal flue outbreak occurs.

The CNMI remains clean in terms of H1N1-related deaths, compared to other states and territories like Guam, which has two fatalities.

Though there are some few side effects such as allergies, health officials said the H1N1 vaccines are "effective and safe."

# A peaceful Christmas in NMI

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrations in the CNMI were mostly trouble-free, with Department of Public Safety's police officers out "in full force."

DPS spokesman Eric F. David said yesterday that no major crimes or serious accidents happened in the Commonwealth during Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

"It's good that nothing happened. …It [was] very peaceful," David said.

On Tinian and Rota, David said, they did not receive any calls or reports about serious incidents.

"You can say it was peaceful too on Tinian and Rota," he said.

The DPS spokesman noted that burglary cases were few on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and even during the weekend.

David said he was at work during the weekend and he received only a few calls about burglaries but no robberies.

"We were out actually in full force. There's no robbery," he said.

As for DPS' campaign against drunk driving during the holiday celebrations, David said he has no available data yet as to how many people were arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol.

"I'm still trying to get into the system. I cannot access the computer," he said.

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With Live Entertainment by Maggie Naputi
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New Year's Day Specials
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Seafood Dinner Buffet at Minami Restaurant
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# Marshalls College gets new president

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** (RNZI/PIR)—A new president has been named at the College of the Marshall Islands to replace the retiring president, Wilson Hess, who is credited with restoring the institution's United States-academic accreditation.

Hess's replacement is Dr. Kenneth Woodbury who has previously worked in Florida, Pennsylvania and Maine in the United States.

According to the *Marshall Islands Journal*, Dr. Woodbury was president of Harrisburg Area Community College in Pennsylvania for nine years, establishing three branch campuses, doubling its enrollment and establishing its endowment foundation. He has also been the president of the Valencia Community College Foundation in Orlando, Florida raising the endowment from $4 million to over $34 million. He is currently the Community Development Specialist for the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council in Eastern Maine, securing nearly $6 million in grants since 2007 for towns and school districts to improve their infrastructure through downtown revitalization and planning grants. Hess is to continue as a consultant with the college. ]

The Majuro-based two-year college was on the verge of losing its U.S. accreditation and the $4 million in U.S. federal grants that come with it in late 2005.

In February this year, the U.S.-based Western Association of Schools and Colleges restored full accreditation on CMI after about seven years of probationary status.

# Remote Marshalls atoll gets connected

**MAJURO, Marshall Islands** (Yokwe/PIR)—One of the most isolated of the Marshall Islands' atolls is now connected by phone and internet service.

"Enewetak's debut call was done at approximately 3pm Majuro time, between Minister Jack Ading [on Majuro] and Mayor Jackson Ading [on Enewetak]," reported Anthony Muller, CEO of the National Telecommunications Authority.

After the official call by Mayor Jackson Ading, local residents were scheduled to make free trial calls to off-island relatives, according to a NTA email to Yokwe Online yesterday afternoon.

The NTA crew arrived on Dec. 21 and joined hands with Enewetak/Ujelang Atoll local Government, Minister Jack Ading, Enewetak/Ujelang Mayor Jackson Ading, and J&H Construction to launch the Atoll's Call Center.

Geographically, Enewetak is far on the western edge of the Marshall Islands Ratak Chain and is actually closer to Pohnpei of the Federated States of Micronesia. "To accomplish this task is most definitely a plus for our nation," said NTA's Mack Capelle.

## ALIEN

*From Page 1*

available. As of press time, Brown has not returned *Saipan Tribune*'s call. She also did not respond to *Saipan Tribune*'s e-mail request for updated information on the "accounting" process.

The Ombudsman's staff, along with some volunteers, have been helping alien workers register with the Office of the Labor Ombudsman from 4pm to 12 midnight everyday since the process began on Dec. 14.

A staff said only a few workers have been showing up in the last few days because they accommodated even those who came before the 4pm regular schedule.

The staff also assisted workers, regardless of their schedule to appear for registration. Some businesses or employers also submitted the registration forms for their employees.

The "accounting" process in the CNMI turned out to be fast and easy for alien workers.

During the second day of registration, Brown said over 10,000 alien workers had already participated in their "accounting" process on Saipan. The registration was held at the Marina Heights II Building in Puerto Rico, where the Ombudsman's office is located.

The registration is fast because workers are only required to fill up a one-page form and attach a copy of their passport or a receipt of their passport's renewal.

Dekada Movement counsel Stephen Woodruff had earlier cautioned alien workers who have no "umbrella permits" from participating in the Ombudsman's "accounting" process.

"There is a very real risk that aliens lacking an umbrella permit who register with the Ombudsman's office could be setting themselves up as targets for deportation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement," said Woodruff.

Brown had refused to comment on this.

In its public notice, the Ombudsman explained that this accounting process is based on Public Law 110-229 (the federalization law), which requires the U.S. Department of the Interior to report to the U.S. Congress the total number of aliens within the Commonwealth.

The Ombudsman said the federalization law further orders DOI to make recommendations to the U.S. Congress about the long-term status of aliens who were physically present in the CNMI on Nov. 28, 2009.

Between Oct. 26 and Nov. 27, 2009, thousands of alien workers and those having immediate relative status were provided "umbrella permits" by the CNMI Department of Labor to stabilize their presence in the Commonwealth in the next two years.

## HEAD START

*From Page 1*

Keiko Yamagata, and 16 tested at or above 10 micrograms per deciliter levels.

Yamagata said the 16 students were referred to the Department of Public Health for further tests to confirm the results.

According to the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, no "threshold" has been established yet regarding the minimum level of lead in the blood that could result in negative cognitive and behavioral development. This, it said, is of concern since children often do not display obvious symptoms of elevated lead levels. Therefore, the best way to detect elevated lead levels is through a blood test.

According to the MedLine Plus Web site, normal results for lead screening should show less than 20 micrograms per deciliter of blood among adults. For children, it said normal results are less than 10 micrograms/dL. It added, though, that normal value ranges may vary slightly among different laboratories.

The CNMI Head Start has a total of 462 students on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. Only 337 were tested; the rest, 125, were not screened or tested due to either lack of parental consent, the children's refusal to undergo testing, or uncooperativeness toward the screening campaign.

The blood screening—which includes drawing blood from the children—was conducted at all Head Start centers, with the help of the Department of Public Health and nursing students of the Northern Marianas College and Emmanuel College. A new test is slated next month.

*Saipan Tribune* learned that Head Start initiated the tests after it was provided a grant to procure three lead analyzers. This was the first time the test was conducted among Head Start students.

Yamagata said that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has reiterated the importance of lead screening and to clarify the requirements for lead toxicity screening for Head Start children.

During last week's Board of Education regular meeting, chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita and vice chair Herman T. Guerrero expressed concern about the issue, saying all students—not just Head Start children—need to be tested to ensure their safety.

Guerrero said: "If this becomes an issue with our kids…we need to seek the governor's and the Legislature's assistance to address the concern."

### Lead poisoning

Lead, a poisonous metal, contains a neurotoxin that is harmful to fetuses and developing young children. Extremely high levels can result in seizure, coma, and even death.

Materials provided to parents of Head Start pupils indicated that children may be exposed to lead poisoning from a variety of environmental sources. The primary one is through contaminated dust from deteriorating lead-based paint in older homes.

In a memorandum from the program's head office, it said the United Stated has made progress in reducing lead exposure among children. However, the issue remains a serious environmental health hazard for those living in poverty and young children under the age of 6.

Estimates based on screening show that low-income and Medicaid-eligible children are nearly five times more likely to have harmful blood lead levels than the general child population.

CDC strategies to reduce blood lead levels include keeping children away from peeling or chipping paints and accessible or chewable surfaces covered with lead-based paints, especially windows, window sills, and window wells.

Children must also eat regular nutritious meals and ensure they have plenty of iron and calcium.

In August 2007, several toys were recalled by major manufacturers due to the presence of lead-based paint.

## CANDIDATES

*From Page 1*

candidates Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero and his running mate House Floor Leader, as well as former senator Ramon "Kumoi" S. Deleon Guerrero and his running mate Dr. David Borja, according to OPA administrative assistant Michelle Camacho who received the 43 campaign statements of account yesterday.

Camacho said the Democratic Party also beat yesterday's deadline.

The candidates for the CNMI's first gubernatorial runoff election on Nov. 23—Covenant Party's Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos and the Republican Party's Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios—have until Jan. 12, 2010, to file their campaign reports.

OPA, however, could not say the total number of filers for this year's general elections because the person in charge of tracking the campaign statements of account, OPA's Wilma Atalig, is currently off island.

Public Auditor Michael Pai, in a phone interview, said Atalig won't be back until Thursday, and only then would they be able to determine how many candidates were able to beat yesterday's filing deadline.

"I think a lot of people came in [yesterday] because it's the deadline," he said.

OPA earlier said that between Nov. 12 and Dec. 11, eight candidates filed their campaign finance reports, bringing to 51 the confirmed number of filers out of 110 candidates, including the 43 who filed yesterday.

Robert A. Guerrero, executive director of the Commonwealth Election Commission, separately told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that "quite a number" of candidates asked for an extension to file their campaign statements of account.

Guerrero said they would know today the exact number of candidates who asked for an extension.

OPA received the first campaign statement of account this year on Nov. 12, from Board of Education vice chair Herman T. Guerrero.

The statement of account must show details of any contribution worth at least $500 received during the election period. Contributions include any monetary or in-kind support issued to a candidate to help his or her political bid.

A candidate or political party will be assessed a penalty of $100 for each calendar day the report is late.

A person who violates the requirements for filing shall, upon conviction, be fined up to $50,000 or imprisoned for up to one year, or both.

In the November 2007 midterm elections, Rep. Ralph DLG Torres (R-Saipan) and Victor Hocog (Ind-Rota) needed $48,300 and $43,900 to win their first terms in the Legislature.

They also received the largest contributions, amounting to $48,700 and $44,300 respectively.

Pai said yesterday that OPA will review the election law to verify whether the campaign statement of account should be made available for public inspection.

In previous elections, these data were readily made available for media and public review right after the filing deadline.

## ARRA

*From Page 1*

the government received the money on Dec. 17 through Bank of Guam.

Ada said over $3 million was drawn down in previous periods.

Acting Gov. Eloy S. Inos, in an interview with reporters yesterday, said the CNMI has so far been awarded over $90 million in ARRA grant and spent $7 million to $8 million of those.

Ada, who oversees the ARRA program in the CNMI, clarified with *Saipan Tribune* that the CNMI has been awarded some $97 million in ARRA money since the federal stimulus funding program started early this year.

"How this works is that we receive notification of all ARRA awards. Once we receive notification, we can start spending the money and then ask for reimbursement from the federal government and that's what we call a drawdown," Ada said.

Ada said the latest ARRA figures will be known by middle of January when the next round of ARRA reporting is due.

Inos, for his part, said the ARRA money so far awarded is "a lot of money that we can pump into the economy."

He, however, said the CNMI has been having "temporary issues" like the "Buy America" clause under the ARRA Act, and transparency issues.

"We're making a lot of progress," he added.

As of Oct. 30, the federal tracking system www.recovery.gov reported that the CNMI has so far been awarded $44.3 million in ARRA money, but only $5.560 million has been received by the CNMI.

In the same report, the federal tracking agency said the central government ranked first among 14 CNMI public and private agencies identified as recipients of the $44.3 million in ARRA money as of Oct. 30. The central government was awarded over $19.456 million, followed by another award of over $6.711 million. Taking the top three spot was the Commonwealth Ports Authority with $5 million.

Recovery.gov is the U.S. government's official Web site providing easy access to data related to ARRA spending, and allows for the reporting of potential fraud, waste and abuse. It said ARRA money has so far created and saved 158 jobs in the CNMI.

In related news, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial issued a Dec. 18 memo mandating all Executive Branch departments to ensure that no unjustified delays in the proper and lawful procurement, selection, and execution of contractual relationships inhibit the ability of the CNMI government to expediently execute and complete projects.

"Delays of either ARRA or CIP funded projects due to inefficiency within any agency in the administration will result in swift and final action, which includes termination of employment," Fitial warned.

# Commerce cautions vs accepting student survey findings as official

The CNMI Department of Commerce cautioned the public yesterday against digesting recent news releases about NMC student survey findings as representative of factual and official data.

News articles regarding NMC student survey findings, including impacts of the minimum wage increases and government employee composition of patrons at poker parlors have been published in recent weeks.

"The Department of Commerce is concerned that the media attention that these student surveys have received may inadvertently cause the general public to believe that these findings to be official CNMI findings," said Deputy Commerce Secretary Sixto Igisomar.

"While we are encouraged by the students' interest in studying data related to social and community issues, it is important to ensure that these data hold integrity through proper sampling and data analysis. When our department conducts surveys and collects data, there is an extensive process that we go through to ensure that the data is as accurate and variances are eliminated to the greatest extent possible. This is critical in ensuring that the official CNMI data truly reflects the situation. In a scenario such as the economic impact of minimum wage, it is essential that the data is accurate and maintains integrity," said Igisomar.

"Everything from the development of the questions to the method used in arriving at the sample is critical. How you phrase a survey question can garner one response over another, which compromises the findings," said acting director of the Commerce Central Statistics Division, Justin Andrews.

The Central Statistics Division is the office of the CNMI Central Government tasked with generating and publishing reports to include the Consumer Price Index,, the Economic Indicators, and the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys. The office is housed under the CNMI Department of Commerce and is extensively consulted with by federal agencies tasked with statistical related work. Recent consultation includes work with the Government Accountability Office on the impact of the minimum wage on the CNMI and American Samoa. Recent surveys conducted by Central Statistics Division of Commerce include the Census of Free Association, which impacted the Compact Impact money received by the CNMI, as well as the Behavioral Risk Factors Survey, which was conducted for the Department of Public Health.

The current CNMI 2010 Census office is also housed under the CNMI Department of Commerce. "Although the office is housed in a different location, the Census contract is between the U.S. Census Bureau and the CNMI Department of Commerce. The census project is statistical in nature, which is why it is housed under the Department of Commerce. Although it is housed under our department, all the recruitment, hiring, and work is done in the CNMI Census Office, with oversight provided by the Secretary," said Igisomar.

"It is essential to ensure that we encourage our students to study and learn about the field of statistics, as it has tremendous importance to many societal issues. Good data and information is the cornerstone to ensuring that our policy-makers and community leaders can make informed and sound decisions. I am happy to see that our students have taken an interest in the area of data collection and statistics and I plan to work with Dr. Fernandez on a partnership which may provide some of these students potential opportunities on upcoming surveys that our department will engage in," said Commerce Secretary Michael Ada. ***(DoC)***


MEET YOUR
Congressman

U.S. Congressman
Gregorio Kilili
C. Sablan
invites you to speak to him, ask questions about issues that concern you most or find out what his office is doing for you.

Tuesday, December 29, 2009
Tuesday Night Market
4:00pm-7:00pm

Thursday, January 7, 2010
Thursday Street Market
6:00pm-9:00pm

Saturday, January 9, 2010
Sabalu Market
7:00am-10:00am

For more information,
call Rep. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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# New law creates a CNMI Office of Grants Management

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed into law on Dec. 14 a bill creating a new Office of Grants Management under the Office of the Governor to be able to better manage the millions of dollars in federal grant funding that the CNMI is eligible to receive every year.

House Bill 16-229 or the Grants Management Act is now Public Law 16-48.

Sponsored by Rep. Victor Hocog (Ind-Rota) and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), H.B. 16-229 passed the House of Representatives on Feb. 25 this year and cleared the Senate on Oct. 28.

The office will be headed by an administrator with at least a bachelor's degree from a U.S.-accredited college or university, and at least five years experience in grant writing or grants management.

Teresa Kim, the governor's acting press secretary, said yesterday that Fitial "has yet to appoint an administrator" for the new office.

The new office's administrator is to report directly to the governor or to another government official the governor has delegated his supervisory responsibility.

Hocog and Palacios said there is a corresponding need to establish an Office of Grants Management within the Office of the Governor given the federal grant funding that the CNMI is eligible to receive.

For example, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, some $97 million has so far been announced for the CNMI as of Oct. 30, based on data from the federal tracking website, www.recovery.gov.

Under the new law, the Office of Grants Management is responsible for establishing a database of federal grants currently received, conduct research on all federal grants that the CNMI is eligible to receive but has not applied for, and develop grant applications for those federal grants the CNMI has not previously submitted grant applications but is eligible to receive.

The new office is also responsible for doing research of federal grants that the CNMI is not currently eligible to receive but might reasonably be made eligible through the Covenant, which makes applicable to the CNMI "those laws which provide federal services and financial assistance programs as they apply to Guam."

Another responsibility of the new office is to develop training programs for government staff in grant writing, grant management and compliance, training on federal regulations and requirements, and practices and trends in federal grant implementation.

Under the new law, the Office of Grants Management will serve as the central point coordinator of federal grants, disseminating grant information and training government staff about the full range of federal assistance the CNMI is eligible to receive.

The new office is also required to provide an annual report to the Legislature on federal grants received by the CNMI by grant, fiscal year, by amount received, by amount expended from each grant, and total federal assistance and grant expenditures computed on a per capita basis.

# Man claims he was denied effective legal assistance but judge disagrees

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who is now serving a 37-month prison term in federal prison for selling methamphetamine hydrochloride is now claiming he was denied effective legal assistance during his trial.

But U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson disagreed, denying yesterday Guang Jing Chen's motion to vacate, set aside, or amend his sentence.

Chen, through counsel F. Matthew Smith, argued in his motion that his detention and restraint is unlawful and unconstitutional in that his conviction and sentence upon which it was based was obtained in violation of his rights.

Smith said Chen was denied effective assistance by a previous counsel and his guilty plea in this matter was a direct result of this ineffective assistance of counsel.

Smith said that Chen believed he was pleading guilty to a charge that would provide him a sentencing range of 12 to 18 months because his prior counsel (G. Anthony Long) had always maintained that he was facing around 18 to 24 months in prison.

Smith said Chen has consistently stated that he had no idea that a sentence of 37 months might be imposed.

Smith said the defendant would not have pleaded guilty had he known he might receive a sentence greater than two years.

A Drug Enforcement Administration special agent stated in his report that Chen was arrested after he sold $500 worth of "ice" to an undercover agent in front of a school in San Antonio.

On Aug. 27, 2008, Chen, who was with then counsel Long, pleaded guilty to three counts of distribution of a controlled substance.

At the sentencing hearing on Oct. 9, 2008, the U.S. government recommended a 37-month prison term. Long recommended a sentence not to exceed 24 months. The federal court sentenced Chen to 37 months.

Chen, through his new counsel, filed a motion to vacate, set aside or amend the sentence. He also filed a motion for certificate of appealability.

In denying Chen's motion, Munson said yesterday that a defendant alleging a Sixth Amendment violation based on ineffective assistance of counsel must demonstrate "a reasonable probability that, but for counsel's unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different."

Munson said that after hearing the U.S. government's recommendation of a 37-month sentence and the counsel's request for Chen's sentence not to exceed two years, Chen was given an opportunity to speak, which he took.

Munson said that Chen explained to the court why he resorted to selling drugs but he did not say anything about his sentence.

The judge said Chen was sentenced to 37 months, which was the least amount of time the defendant could have been sentenced in the applicable range.

Munson said that Chen has not met his burden of demonstrating "a reasonable probability that, but for and counsel's unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different."

Munson declined to issue a certificate of appealability because Chen has not "made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right."

# DEQ brigade sets Kagman beach cleanup Jan. 9

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at Tank Beach in Kagman on Jan. 9, 2010.

If you would like to volunteer your time to clean and beautify our island, meet with the group on Saturday, Jan. 9, 2010, at 8am at the Tank Beach parking lot. Volunteers will split into groups and go north or south, cleaning the beach until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***


**COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION**
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**
**CUC-IFB-10-009**

**Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan**

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting sealed bids from qualified contractors or firms for the Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

**A mandatory site visit and pre-bid meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2009 at 10:OO AM, local time** at CUC Power Plant 1 Administration Building, Lower Base, Saipan, to ensure that the contractors are fully aware of the work involved and familiarize with the site conditions. All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the plant site conditions in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or performance of work under the contract.

One (1) original and five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"IFB 10 - 009 – Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, Room No.4, 3rd Floor Joeten Dandan, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **Wednesday, December 30, 2009 at IOAM.,** (CST) local time, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A bid guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury. A performance and payment bond of hundred (100%) percent each of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety for proposal security. No advance payment will be authorized on the project or an Irrevocable Letter of Credit (100% aggregate contract cost/CUC Beneficiary) or a payment bond. All insurers questions, concerns and qualification should handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Tide 4, Division 7). A Clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

The bidder is required to submit a copy of his CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less that the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page - http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

The Scope-of-Work and Bid package will be **e-mailed**, upon request, to all interested bidders, by the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, during working days, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 PM, local time, **until December 23, 2009**. Contractors are advised that the work will be carried out as a part of CUC response actions under the consent decree noted as Stipulated Order No. 2 (SO 2).

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than **10:OO AM local time on Thursday, December 24,2009**, to Mr. Manuel B. Sablan, Jr., Procurement & Supply Manager via email at **msablan@cucgov.net** and Mr. Venugopal Prabhakara, Power Generation Managing Engineer via email at **venu@cucgov.net** with a copy to Ms. Becky Grimes at **beckyg@cucgov.net**.

Selection procedure shall be in full compliance with CUC Procurement Regulations. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the interest of the government.

/s/ TIMOTHY M. CONNOR
CUC Legal Counsel

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE
Assistant Executive Director for Operation

/s/ ANTONIO S. MUNA
Executive Director



**GROUP HEALTH & LIFE INSURANCE TRUST FUND**
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Website: www.nmiretirement.com
Email: administrator01@nmiretirement.com

**EMERGENCY**
**Request for Proposals**

**NO. GH10-001**
**GROUP LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE**
**FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES**

OPENING DATE: **DECEMBER 16, 2009** CLOSING DATE: **DECEMBER 31, 2009**

The Board of Trustees of the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund ("NMIRF"), charged with administering the Group Health & Life Insurance Program ("GHLIP"), a separate and distinct trust component of the NMIRF, is soliciting sealed proposals from qualified insurance companies and firms to provide group life insurance coverage to employees and retirees of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Government. To receive the RFP packet, you must fax, e-mail or mail your request to:

Mark A. Aguon, Administrator
Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund
P.O. Box 501247 CK
Saipan, MP 96950-1247
Fax: 670/664-8080
E-mail: administrator01@nmiretirement.com

The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfections in a proposal if doing so is in the best interest of the Fund. All proposals shall become the property of the NMI Retirement Fund.

# Inos: No change in FY 2010 budget resource level

## But admin wants 8-hour work cuts, unpaid holidays

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Acting Gov. Eloy S. Inos yesterday said the Fitial administration will not revise the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations of $150 million, but would like the incoming 17th Legislature to consider an eight-hour work cut per pay period and unpaid holidays, among other austerity measures.

Inos, at the same time, said 2009 has been a "challenging" year but the CNMI is "lucky" not to have had a major calamity this year.

He added that unlike other territories or states like Hawaii, which has been furloughing teachers, the CNMI is not likely to experience the same.

A Joint Legislative Conference Committee formed to address a deadlock in the FY 2010 budget scrapped the talks altogether on Dec. 18, leaving it up to the 17th Legislature to pass the budget.

Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said yesterday that the dissolved committee, however, is poised to release this week its list of recommendations for austerity measures to the new Legislature.

The House budget bill identified budgetary resources of $162.820 million, which the Senate agreed to.

Inos

But while the House bill pegs the appropriations at $150,288,886, the Senate amended it to $154,418,886 and included austerity measures like a 16-hour cut in government work hours per pay period to help reduce the projected deficit of $15.3 million in FY 2010.

The House rejected the Senate-amended budget bill and a conference committee was formed, and later dissolved.

Inos said the Fitial administration has not sat down with the leadership of the incoming Legislature.

"We need to go back and try to see what we can do with the 2010 budget. We need the cost-reduction efforts in 2010 in the same manner that we needed it in 2009 and they never came to pass so we need to address that," he said, adding that they will be addressing both the FYs 2010 and 2011 budgets.

Besides the eight-hour reduction every two weeks, the administration is also looking at other austerity measures such as unpaid holidays.

Under the proposal, those who work during holidays will not get paid, while those who work during the holidays will not get paid overtime but will be paid the normal rate.

The administration projected some $11.5 million in overspending for the first quarter of FY 2010 alone, or from October to December.

### CNMI-federal relations

Inos hopes that 2010 will be a better year for the CNMI in terms of economy than the "challenging" 2009.

The acting governor also said there is always room for improving CNMI-federal relations.

"I think overall, a lot of people took the lawsuit as adverse condition. It's obviously a new concept for us. We're a small commonwealth, but many jurisdictions in the U.S. at the state level take the federal government to court on various issues. We're no exception. That aside, I think we've got a very good cordial relations and when I say that, I'm talking about the oversight agency which is the U.S. Department of the Interior," he told reporters right after Koblerville Elementary School students performed Christmas carols in the lobby of the Office of the Governor on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon.

Inos said Interior "has been very cooperative" and has been understanding of the CNMI's need to reprogram money to go toward power plant projects.

He said the Fitial administration looks forward to meeting soon with Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Tony Babauta, whom the administration invited to the inauguration of Fitial and Inos on Jan. 11, 2010.

Babauta was set to visit Saipan but had to cancel it to go to American Samoa after it was struck by an earthquake and tsunami.

"Tony is not a new player in the territories. He's played pivotal roles in policy formulation under the Committee on Insular Affairs in the U.S. Congress… Tony knows the territories. He knows our issues, challenges, and we just hope we can put our efforts together, work towards the betterment of the CNMI," Inos added.

Inos added that a Cabinet revamp or "redefinition of mission" is a natural process.

Fitial earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that he's not satisfied with the performance of Cabinet members and other political appointees, adding that there will be "changes" when his second term begins in January.

## Man ordered to answer 3 sexual abuse charges

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman found probable cause yesterday to warrant the filing of charges against a 39-year-old man who was arrested for allegedly sexually abusing two minors.

At the preliminary hearing, Wiseman determined that there was probable cause to believe that Marcelino Carlos may have committed the crimes.

Carlos is facing three counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree charges.

Wiseman ordered Carlos to answer the charges and remanded him to the custody of the Department of Corrections.

Arraignment was set for Jan. 4 at 9am.

Chief Prosecutor George Hasselback represented the CNMI government. Assistant Public Defender Matthew Holley served as counsel for Carlos.

Wiseman earlier imposed a $50,000 cash bail on Carlos.

Detective Vincente S. Mareham stated in his report that on Dec. 9, 2009, a Division of Youth Services social worker called the police to report about a sexual abuse incident.

Mareham learned that Carlos allegedly sexually abused a girl when she was then 8 or 9 years old.

Carlos also allegedly sexually abused another teenager when she was just 8 years old. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

**AT THE FESTIVAL**
Members of the Japanese Society of CNMI and PDM Promoters Inc. wrap up their live music and dance performances at the Japanese Mochitsuki Fiesta at the Paseo de Marianas on Saturday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

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# Fishing vessel sinks off American Samoa

**PAGO PAGO, American Samoa** (The Samoa News/PIR)—In American Samoa, the fishing vessel *Cape Elizabeth*, formerly the *Tradition* sank on Dec. 20 after a fire reportedly started in the galley. All 22 crew members aboard were safely evacuated according to accounts from witnesses and the US Coast Guard report issued Thursday.

Eddie DaCosta, former chief engineer on the *Cape Elizabeth*, commented on the Web site tunaseiners.com, "The captain told me that some of the crew's shoes were melting from the heat of the deck as they were waiting to get into the skiff. They were picked up by another one of their company boats, *Cape Breton*, It's too bad, she was a great ship, extremely well built."

At this point it is believed the fire started in the galley and consumed the whole boat within 24 hours. F/V *Cape Elizabeth* was a tuna purse seiner fishing in the Western Pacific Ocean.

According to DaCosta the boat was built by J.M. Martinac Shipbuilding in Tacoma, Washington as the *Tradition* for Manuel Silva Inc in San Diego in 1980.

The *Cape Elizabeth* was purchased from Silva by the Chen family in Taiwan who operated it for a few years before selling it to Tri-Marine.

Tri-Marine operates several U.S. vessels out of American Samoa and is based in Seattle.

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Honolulu and Marine Safety Detachment American Samoa have the lead for the investigation.

The 14th Coast Guard District command center reported that the F/V *Cape Elizabeth*, a 238ft commercial fishing vessel, sunk 750 miles north of American Samoa in approximately 2900 fathoms, Dec. 20, 2009.

There was a fire reported onboard the vessel; however, all 22 crew members got off the vessel safely. They were transported back to American Samoa by their sister vessel, F/V *Cape Breton*. At the time of incident, *Cape Elizabeth* had approximately 50,000 gallons of diesel onboard, but there is no visible sheen in the area, the report said.

Coast Guard personnel will continue to monitor the situation from Honolulu and investigate from MSD America Samoa.

According to the report signed by PA3 Mike De Nyse, the Coast Guard investigators said that they will need to rely primarily on crew's interviews to ascertain what happened, because the vessel sunk in very deep water. The cause of the incident is currently under investigation.

## PACIFIC BRIEFS

### Moderate quake recorded off Samoa

**MELBOURNE, Australia** (Radio Australia/PIR)—A moderate 5.5-magnitude quake has struck off the south Pacific island state of Samoa. The U.S. Geological Survey says the quake struck around 280 kilometers south south-west of the capital Apia. There was no tsunami alert and no immediate reports of damage. Nine people died in September when a tsunami hit the northern Tongan island of Niuatoputapu following a magnitude 8 earthquake. The tsunami also killed 143 people in Samoa and another 34 in neighboring American Samoa.

### Another entangled whale freed off Maui

**HONOLULU** (Pacific Islands Report)—Rescuers freed an entangled humpback whale off the Coast of Maui on Christmas Day, the second whale saved by Maui well-wishers in the past three weeks. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a group from the Hawaiian Islands Entanglement Response found the most recent victim of ocean debris wrapped in fishing gear. Divers were able to cut most the rope, including a dangling anchor free before the whale swam off. A similar rescue was performed on Dec. 6 is Maui waters.

### Continental begins Fiji-Honolulu flights

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Tourism Fiji expects the new flight service offered by Continental Micronesia between Fiji and Honolulu will boost Japanese and U.S. visitor numbers to Fiji in 2010. Scheduled flights now operate on Tuesdays and Saturdays from Nadi to Honolulu and Wednesdays and Sundays from Nadi to Guam. Patrick Wong says it's exciting and will provide key benefits to tourism and opens up more visitors from other parts of the world.

### Samoa to ban cell phone use while driving

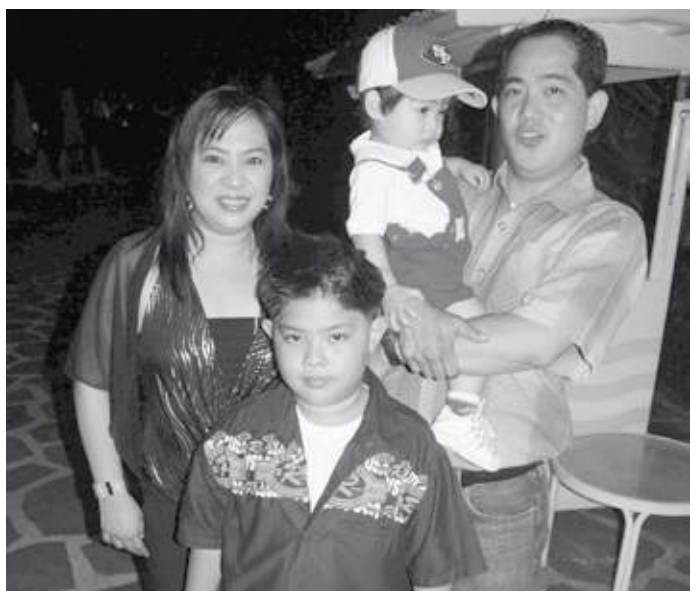
**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** (RNZI/PIR)—The Samoa government has announced a ban on the use of mobile phone while driving. The move will be introduced by way of a new Road Traffic regulation which will become effective next year when the head of state will endorse the new change. According to a Cabinet decision the regulation will stop drivers from answering and making a call as well as writing, sending or reading a text message. It will also ban turning the phone on or off as well as operating it for any other function such as holding the mobile phone to or near to, the ear whether or not engaged in a phone call or phone conversation.

## Can you identify

THE NMI Council for the Humanities, in collaboration with the *Saipan Tribune* is running a series of photographs in this section every Tuesday and is inviting the public to identify the persons or places featured in this section.

If you can identify the persons or places in the picture, please contact the NMI Council for the Humanities by telephone (235-4785), via email (photo@nmihumanities.org) or by visiting the Council's office located in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. These images are from the Council's Historic Photograph Database which is currently being developed to help document the history and cultures of the CNMI.

Last week's featured photograph has been identified as sisters Margaret, left, and Rosa Delos Reyes (familian "Kingking"). The NMI Humanities Council thanks Moses T. Fejeran, Evelyn Salas and Jesus Santos for identifying these individuals.



**BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT** CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy birthday to Emy Alfonso, who celebrated her birthday on Dec. 28! Greetings come from your family and Transpac/Coke friends.

**BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT**

Happy birthday to Markel Deion Toves, who is celebrating his 12th birthday today, Dec. 29. Wishing you the best on your special day! Warm greetings come from your entire Chalan Piao family!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

### Dec. 29, 1989

**HANMI braces for worst**

Hotel operators are bracing for the worst next year as the financial chaos that began more than a year ago in Southeast Asia shows no sign of improvement, according to Ron D. Sablan, president of the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands. Asia's economic problems dragged the Northern Marianas tourism economy into a double-digit plunge in tourist arrivals which resulted in an average occupancy rate of 50 percent for most hotels, he said. In 1999, Sablan said hotel occupancy may dip further or remain the same as this year. He is however hoping that the tourism economy will show some sign of improvement towards the end of 1999.

**Tax receipts drop as business sluggish**

Local businesses continue to suffer without let-up from the year-long financial upheaval in Asia, pitching in less taxes to the government coffers in October at $8.82 million, or an 11 percent decline from the same period last year, according to the governor's financial adviser. While the figure was 21 percent over projections of $7.28 million for that month, the Business Gross Receipts Tax collections still reflect sluggish business activities in the Northern Marianas. "Although we're slightly ahead of BGRT projections, we're still below last year's," said Michael S. Sablan, special advisor on finance and budget to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio, "As we expected, this activity has been on a downside because of the economic slump."

### Dec. 29, 1999

**House divided on new student aid bill**

Barely 10 months after capping government educational assistance at $15,000, lawmakers are proposing a new scholarship program that will grant up to $20,000 in financial aid to exceptional high school students for college here or in the U.S. mainland. But the House of Representatives was divided whether to grant such an amount in light of the financial difficulties confronting the Commonwealth which have reduced the budget set aside for scholarship. Because of the disagreement, Senate Bill 11-67, sponsored by Senate President Paul A. Manglona and passed in July 1998 by the upper house, was referred to the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare for further review.

**Lawmakers shoot down 'Chamorro initiative'**

Due to potential racial conflict, the House of Representatives yesterday voted down a legislative initiative seeking a constitutional amendment to refer to Chamorro as indigenous people of the Northern Marianas. "It's sad that we have to make the distinction between the Chamorros and the Carolinians," said Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider, who acknowledged that he may be biased for disapproving the proposal because he has a Carolinian blood being part Yapese. He stressed that both races are minorities on the islands, noting that there are about 38,000 people here with Chamorro or Carolinian blood as opposed to 73,000 total population. But Rep. Frank G. Cepeda, proponent of the initiative, maintained majority of the people who attended a public hearing on the issue approved the measure because they didn't want to refer to themselves as indigenous but Chamorro.

### Dec. 29, 2000

**Budget talks collapse**

The House and the Senate failed to hammer out a budget deal yesterday in yet another stalemate that is expected to force the government to use previous approved spending level to operate for the next nine months of FY 2001. House Ways and Means Committee chair Antonio M. Camacho informed the Senate that they were ending the bicameral conference after three previous meetings produced no pact. But his counterpart Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Sen. Edward U. Maratita said they would still press for a compromise with the House by early next year since there is no official word yet on the dissolution of the joint committee.

**BOE: No to security personnel in campuses**

The State Board of Education yesterday voted against a Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council resolution requesting the Public School System to hire and station uniformed security guards in public school campuses. BOE member Esther Fleming expressed strong opposition to the measure, saying that PSS students do not need to be exposed to a tight-security school environment at the risk of making them feel like "criminals."

# DPH staff undergoes claims processing training

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Twenty-two participants from the Commonwealth Health Center, Medicaid Office, Community Guidance Center, and Rota Health Center pose with CNMI Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez after completing the "Certified Medical Billing & Coding Specialist" course at the Guam Marianas Training Center.

Guam Marianas Training Center recently conducted a "Certified Medical Billing & Coding Specialist" course for CNMI Department of Public Health staff.

The course was funded by the Workforce Investment Agency.

A total of 22 participants from the Commonwealth Health Center, Medicaid Office, Community Guidance Center, and Rota Health Center completed the 10-day course, which ended on Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2009.

The course gives much needed training to DPH staff responsible for generating and processing claims. The same course is expected to be offered on Rota and Tinian.

Fe Valencia-Ovalles and Russell Ragay of the Guam Marianas Training Center, CNMI Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, DPH chief finance officer Esther Muña, and Helen Sablan of DPH presented certificates of completion to the course participants. ***(PR)***

## COURSE PARTICIPANTS

**Rota Health Center:**
Imelda Marie Atalig
Sharlene Masga
Esther Yatar

**Commonwealth Health Center:**
Corazon P. Ada
Roxanne Diaz Aranda
Suzie Ngirasldei
Elena DlGuerrero
Roselynn Gibbons
Evelyn Itibus
Lourdes Kaipat Lampkin
Angela Maui
Virginia Mettao
Bradley Ngewakl
Aurelio Ngiraibuuch
Rosalia Cabrera Pangelinan
Bernadita Rabauliman
Henry Reyes Jr.
Yvonne B. Sablan
Petra R. Santos
Richard Seidler Jr.

**Medicaid Agency:**
Remedio S. Reyes

**Community Guidance Center:**
Marian T. Lizama

## SEASON OF GIVING

Above, Frances Demapan, president of Joeten Motors Corp., leads other Joeten Motors officials and employees in presenting a check donation to Saipan Southern High School at the Joeten Motors showroom along Beach Road.

Right, Joeten Motors general manager Matthew Deets presents a check donation to representatives of the Marianas Baptist Academy at the Joeten Motors showroom along Beach Road.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

**Robert Tenorio Torres**
**Attorney at Law**
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
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Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670)234-7859
Fax: (670)234-5749

Attorney for Bank of Guam

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT**
**FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

| | |
|---|---|
| **BANK OF GUAM,** Plainfiff, | **Civil Action No. 08-0126-CV** |
| **CARMEN C. CABRERA,** Defendants. | **NOTICE OF SALE** |

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 1, 2009, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in the following raw, undeveloped property, consisting of 1,098 sq.m., located in Gualo Rai, Saipan: Tract No. 21825-4-1-R1, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2098/84, the original of which was recorded September 18, 1984 as Document No. 84-1962 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan, CNMI.

**Date, Time, and Place of Sale.** The sale will be held on January 20, 2010, at the hour of 10:00 am, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public and will be held in reserve.

**Terms and Conditions of Sale.**

1. Rights and duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:

   a) withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before bid for such property is accepted.

   b) To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and

   c) To reject any and all bids.

2. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, expect that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, PO Box 5003758 CK, Saipan MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859'; Fax: 670-234-5749.

3. Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to the Bank of Guam.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct an enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.

5. Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED this 25th day of November, 2009.

/s/ Robert T. Torrres, Auctioneer

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER
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EDITORIAL

## Redefining human rights

The Obama administration's commitment to the traditional American cause of promoting democracy and human rights has been widely questioned, and not without reason. So some rights advocates were pleased by an address that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered at Georgetown University, in which she laid out "the Obama administration's human rights agenda for the 21st century." We're not so happy.

Ms. Clinton said that the administration, "like others before us, will promote, support and defend democracy." She pledged that it would publicly denounce abuses by other governments and support dissidents and civil society groups. While saying that "principled pragmatism" would govern human rights discussions with "key countries like China and Russia," Ms. Clinton went on to spell out specific U.S. concerns with those nations, including Beijing's persecution of peaceful reformers and the murders of journalists in Russia.

As Ms. Clinton herself suggested, such pledges have been the common currency of American governments. But she did not limit herself to past principles. She offered an innovation: The Obama administration, she said, would "see human rights in a broad context," in which "oppression of want—want of food, want of health, want of education, and want of equality in law and in fact"—would be addressed alongside the oppression of tyranny and torture. "That is why," Ms. Clinton said, "the cornerstones of our 21st-century human rights agenda" would be "supporting democracy" AND "fostering development."

This is indeed an important change in U.S. human rights policy—but the idea behind it is pure 20th century. Ms. Clinton's lumping of economic and social "rights" with political and personal freedom was a standard doctrine of the Soviet Bloc, which used to argue at every East-West conference that human rights in Czechoslovakia were superior to those in the United States, because one provided government health care that the other lacked. In fact, as U.S. diplomats used to tirelessly respond, rights of liberty—for free expression and religion, for example—are unique in that they are both natural and universal; they will exist so long as governments do not suppress them. Health care, shelter and education are desirable social services, but they depend on resources that governments may or may not possess. These are fundamentally different goods, and one cannot substitute for another.

Ms. Clinton said that in adding "human development" to human rights and democracy, "we have to tackle all three simultaneously." But there are two dangers in her approach. One is that non-democratic regimes will seize on the economic aspect of her policy as an substitute for political reform—as dictators have been doing for decades. Another is that the Obama administration will itself, in working with friendly but unfree countries, choose the easy route of focusing on development, while downplaying democracy.

Judging from Ms. Clinton's own rhetoric, that is the approach the State Department is headed toward in the Arab Middle East. In a major speech last month in Morocco, she said that U.S. engagement with Islamic countries would henceforth focus on education, science and technology, and "entrepreneurship"—all foundations of "development." She made no mention of democracy. If the Obama administration believes that liberty is urgently needed in the homelands of al-Qaida, Ms. Clinton still has offered no sign of it.

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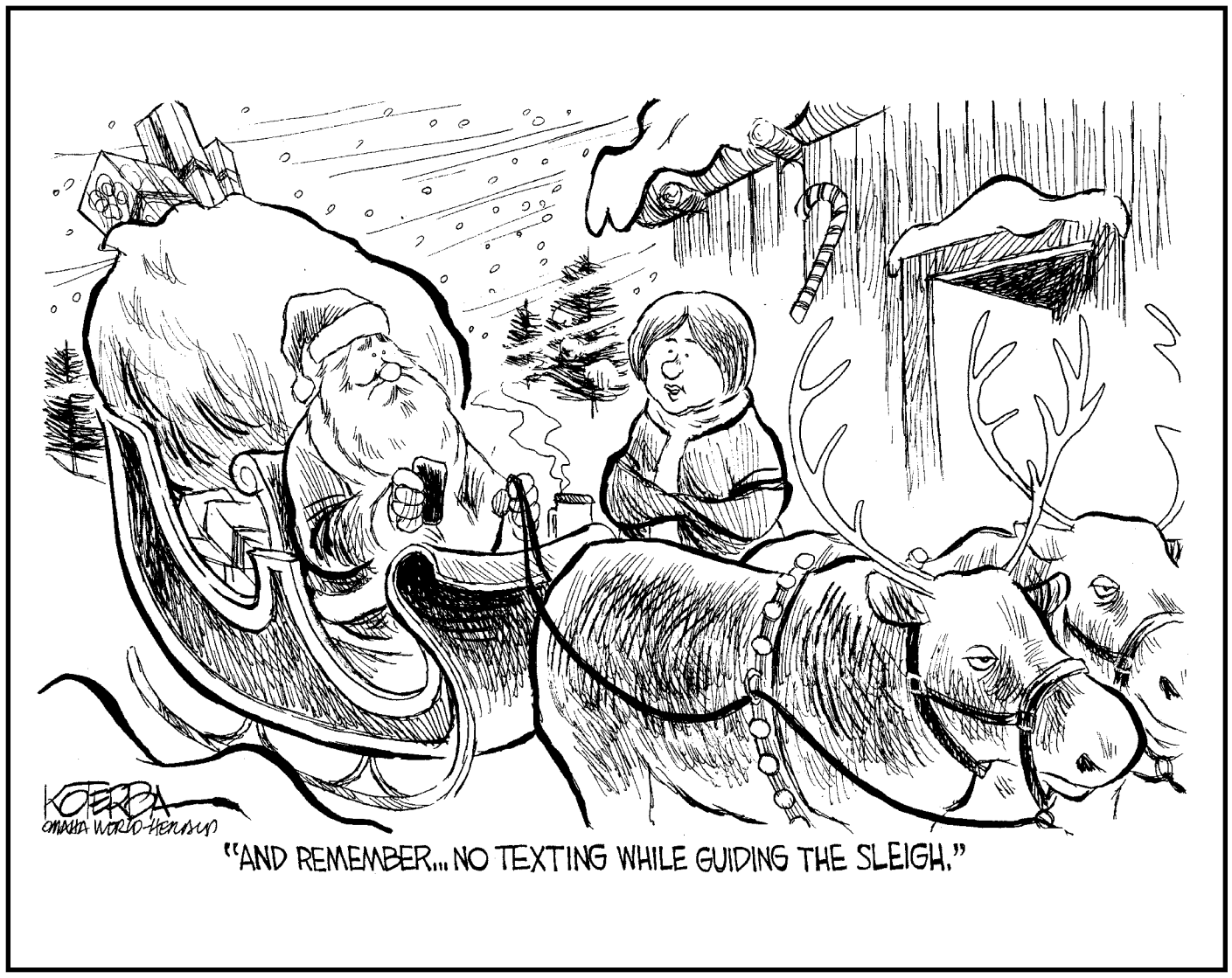



## Democrats, reclaim your center

**By WILLIAM M. DALEY**
Special to The Washington Post

*The writer was secretary of commerce in the Clinton administration and chairman of Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign.*

The announcement by Alabama Rep. Parker Griffith that he is switching to the Republican Party is just the latest warning sign that the Democratic Party—my lifelong political home—has a critical decision to make: Either we plot a more moderate, centrist course or risk electoral disaster not just in the upcoming midterms but in many elections to come.

Rep. Griffith's decision makes him the fifth centrist Democrat to either switch parties or announce plans to retire rather than stand for re-election in 2010. These announcements are a sharp reversal from the progress the Democratic Party made starting in 2006 and continuing in 2008, when it re-established itself as the nation's majority party for the first time in more than a decade. That success happened for one major reason: Democrats made inroads in geographies and constituencies that had trended Republican since the 1960s. In these two elections, a majority of independents and a sizable number of moderate Republicans joined the traditional Democratic base to sweep Democrats to commanding majorities in Congress and to bring Barack Obama to the White House.

These independents and Republicans supported Democrats based on a message indicating that the party would be a true Big Tent—that we would welcome a diversity of views even on tough issues such as abortion, gun rights and the role of government in the economy.

This call was answered not just by voters but by a surge of smart, talented candidates who came forward to run and win under the Democratic banner in districts dominated by Republicans for a generation. These centrists swelled the party's ranks in Congress and contributed to Obama's victories in states such as Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia, Colorado and other Republican bastions.

But now they face a grim political fate. On the one hand, centrist Democrats are being vilified by left-wing bloggers, pundits and partisan news outlets for not being sufficiently liberal, "true" Democrats. On the other, Republicans are pounding them for their association with a party that seems to be advancing an agenda far to the left of most voters.

The political dangers of this situation could not be clearer.

Witness the losses in New Jersey and Virginia in this year's off-year elections. In those gubernatorial contests, the margin of victory was provided to Republicans by independents—many of whom had voted for Obama. Just one year later, they had crossed back to the Republicans by 2-to-1 ratios.

Witness the drumbeat of ominous poll results. Obama's approval rating has fallen below 49 percent overall and is even lower—41 percent—among independents. On the question of which party is best suited to manage the economy, there has been a 30-point swing toward Republicans since November 2008, according to Ipsos. Gallup's generic congressional ballot shows Republicans leading Democrats. There is not a hint of silver lining in these numbers. They are the quantitative expression of the swing bloc of American politics slipping away.

And, of course, witness the loss of Rep. Griffith and his fellow moderate Democrats who will retire. They are perhaps the truest canaries in the coal mine.

Despite this raft of bad news, Democrats are not doomed to return to the wilderness. The question is whether the party is prepared to listen carefully to what the American public is saying. Voters are not re-embracing conservative ideology, nor are they falling back in love with the Republican brand. If anything, the Democrats' salvation may lie in the fact that Republicans seem even more hell-bent on allowing their radical wing to drag the party away from the center.

All that is required for the Democratic Party to recover its political footing is to acknowledge that the agenda of the party's most liberal supporters has not won the support of a majority of Americans—and, based on that recognition, to steer a more moderate course on the key issues of the day, from health care to the economy to the environment to Afghanistan.

For liberals to accept that inescapable reality is not to concede permanent defeat. Rather, let them take it as a sign that they must continue the hard work of slowly and steadily persuading their fellow citizens to embrace their perspective. In the meantime, liberals—and, indeed, all of us—should have the humility to recognize that there is no monopoly on good ideas, as well as the long-term perspective to know that intraparty warfare will only relegate the Democrats to minority status, which would be disastrous for the very constituents they seek to represent.

The party's moment of choosing is drawing close. While it may be too late to avoid some losses in 2010, it is not too late to avoid the kind of rout that redraws the political map. The leaders of the Democratic Party need to move back toward the center—and in doing so, set the stage for the many years' worth of leadership necessary to produce the sort of pragmatic change the American people actually want.

**EDITORIAL POLICY** The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# Progress report: One month after November 28

**IMMIGRATION FORUM**

**By MAYA KARA and BRUCE MAILMAN**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Maya Kara is a native of Hungary and comes to the practice of law by way of her interest in Asian history. Bruce Mailman is a native of Bakersfield, California and was a private investigator in California prior to becoming a lawyer. Both have lived and practiced law in the CNMI for over 20 years, Maya in government service and Bruce in private practice. They are married and are partners in the law firm of Mailman & Kara, LLC in Garapan, Saipan.*

We are just one month into the "federalization" process. What's working and what isn't? The sky hasn't fallen, but there are still some chunks threatening to drop on us. We've even had some very pleasant surprises, along with a few disappointments. In this article we will look back at some of the hot topics of the past few months, based on what we are seeing now, in our own immigration practice.

## UMBRELLAS, PAROLE & VEPS

**Umbrella Permits.** Despite the six-month implementation delay, nobody was quite ready for prime time on Nov. 28. Like them or not, the umbrella permits issued by the CNMI Departments of Labor and Commerce relieved a lot of pressure on guest workers and other foreign nationals, on their employers, on the CNMI government and on USCIS. Many people who would otherwise been out of status now have the opportunity to find work and remain in the CNMI. Thanks to the umbrellas, most people have the time to watch the new USCIS rules go into effect and how they will be administered, and can decide when to move from the legacy CNMI system to the U.S. visa system. Thumbs up.

**Parole, Advance & Otherwise.** One very positive development has been the four types of parole instituted for CNMI residents by USCIS, and discussed in detail in our last two columns. We are handling quite a few advance parole applications right now, and have had no major problems. Both USCIS and Customs & Border Protection (CBP) have been very cooperative and helpful. There are some glitches to be worked out yet with advance parole documents. The biggest has been transmitting hard copy to and from the USCIS Guam Field Office—one advance parole approval was mailed to us on Dec. 16 but not delivered until Dec. 22—but that is not the fault of USCIS. Advance parole is for travel to foreign countries and return to the CNMI; the other forms of parole, both for travel to Guam and the mainland U.S., and for continued CNMI status, are also on track. Thumbs way up.

## INTRACOMPANY TRANSFEREE (L & EB1) & H VISAS

**L & EB1 Visas.** Aside from the liberal parole rules, the biggest good news for employers and for qualified employees is that executives, managers and "specialized knowledge" workers may be able to "transfer" into their own jobs and obtain U.S. visas in the process. We discussed "L" nonimmigrant visas (and their immigrant counterpart with the same basic requirements, EB1) in detail, in a prior column. Basically, an intracompany transferee is an executive or manager (L1A) or specialized knowledge employee (L1B) who has worked in that capacity for at least one of the last three years for the foreign parent, subsidiary, affiliate or branch—what USCIS terms a "foreign component"—of a U.S. company. Before Nov. 28, CNMI companies were "foreign"; now they qualify as "U.S." companies. In late November, USCIS confirmed to us that employment for a CNMI company during the past three years may qualify an L visa applicant, if, after Nov. 28, the CNMI company still has a foreign component. This is important for all companies whose employees may qualify for the L or EB1 visa, but especially so for companies from countries like China, who do not qualify for E1 (treaty trader) or E2 (treaty investor) status. Thumbs way up.

**H1 & H2 Visas.** The news is not so good on the H visa front. One of the positive things about the Consolidated Natural Resources Act (CNRA – the "federalization" statute) is that there are no caps on H1 or H2 visas for either the CNMI or Guam, for the duration of the transition period. H1s are for highly skilled professionals with four-year degrees, such as accountants, engineers, and the like; H2s are for skilled workers in temporary jobs.

So what's wrong with that? First, H2 is not likely to be useful for the majority of CNMI employers and employees. Not only are H2 visa holders hired for limited periods of time, but the jobs themselves must be time-limited. H2s are most useful in the construction trades for building specific projects, such as hotels, but are not meant for long-term hire once the project is complete.

Second, both H1 and H2 employees must be offered salaries that meet fairly set standards. For H2 workers on Guam, for example, the Guam Department of Labor sets the "Common Construction Prevailing Wage Rates," which run from just under $11/hour to just under $17/hour; Guam's rates can be accessed online at http://guamdol.net/content/view/283/408/.

For H1s, the salary offered by the prospective employer must meet U.S. Department of Labor standards, which are based on the prevailing wage throughout the U.S. for each job category. There has been some talk of a "CNMI H1" wage scale, but so far nothing more than that. Thumbs halfway down.

## CNMI E2 & CW1 VISAS

These are the two new, transition-period U.S. visa categories for the CNMI only. Neither is effective yet. We are waiting for the final CNMI E2 rules, which are supposed to "grandfather" holders of CNMI investor entry permits in three categories: two-year, perpetual and retiree. The CW1 rules were tossed out by a federal judge on procedural grounds, but then republished properly in identical form; the public comment period ends Jan. 7. Each visa has problems which we hope will be addressed in the final rules.

**CNMI E2.** Although CNMI E2 is intended to grandfather existing CNMI investors through Dec. 31, 2014, the CNRA threw a curve ball: to qualify for CNMI E2, the investor must show "continuous" residence in the CNMI, interpreted to mean presence in the CNMI for at least 51 percent of each year. That was not a condition of any of the investor permits supposedly grandfathered, and many investors were present only a part of each year, especially those involved in international business who could afford the CNMI's rather expensive "perpetual" Certificate of Foreign Investment, and retirees who may have built or purchased homes in the CNMI and visited for substantial periods of time, but less than six months and one day each year. This means that many legitimate investors will not qualify for CNMI E2. It is part of the CNRA and cannot be changed by rules.

Also, USCIS has told us that CNMI investors who were outside the CNMI on Nov. 28, but who did not have advance parole granted, have lost their CNMI status and thus cannot apply for CNMI E2, regardless whether they can establish continuous residence. This is a policy decision, not mandated by the CNRA. We have a client, for example, a former college professor and a long-time CNMI businessman, who has lived in the CNMI full-time since the mid-1980s. He was outside the CNMI for medical reasons over the past couple of months, could not return before Nov. 28, and did not have an advance parole. Status lost. Fortunately, he is a citizen of a "treaty country" and should be able to obtain a U.S. E2 visa. We do not know how many others are in the same situation.

Overall a good idea, and CNMI E2 will be helpful to investors who cannot qualify for another U.S. visa—but the jury is still out. We are telling all of our clients who can to obtain a standard U.S. visa. Thumbs halfway down.

**CW1.** Overall, the CW1 rules seem reasonably well thought out, with one glaring exception: the restriction on private individuals hiring domestic workers. Under the proposed CW1 rules, all such workers must be employed by "manpower" agencies, a requirement not in effect elsewhere in the U.S.

The logic behind the rule is obvious: In the past, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were numerous cases of abuse of domestic workers amounting, in some cases, to indentured servitude. Some of the biggest offenders were manpower agencies; as a result of multiple labor cases, most of those companies folded nearly two decades ago, and the CNMI Department of Labor imposed additional conditions on these kinds of companies.

Some years ago, the CNMI Department of Labor also started requiring that private employers of domestic workers prove that they are financially capable of paying their employees. That, combined with the availability of consensual transfers, seriously reduced the number of cases brought by this class of worker. We have not had a request to handle a domestic worker's case for years.

The rule is well intentioned, but is likely to cause serious harm to the elderly and the disabled, who depend on domestic workers and caregivers who must be reliable and trustworthy and whom, in many cases, there is already a long-term relationship. We suspect the drafters of the regulations were not aware that the CNMI lacks the assistive services that are common in the United States, such as nursing homes, assisted living retirement communities, hospice, home health care (limited availability), visiting nurse services (also limited), and so forth. All of these functions have, until now, been carried out by domestic helpers. The rule is also likely to create a serious hardship to families with young children. In the absence of sufficient daycare in the CNMI, working mothers rely on domestic workers to make it possible for them to hold a job; in the current economy two paychecks are a necessity to raise a family.

For the CW1 rules in general, thumbs partly up. As for the domestic worker rule, we think the "general" who wrote this rule is still fighting the last war. Thumbs way down.

The progress report is overall pretty good. USCIS is operating at the Application Support Center in Garapan, with considerable flexibility and compassion. Customs & Border Protection has been handling entry issues smoothly. We have not had much contact with ICE, the "immigration police" part of Department of Homeland Security, but the new Immigration Court seems to be up and running and the first batch of hearings have now been conducted.

*The information contained in this column is intended as general information only, and not as individual legal advice. Readers should obtain professional legal advice before taking action with respect to their individual situations. Readers may submit questions regarding federalization or immigration issues to the authors by email to lex-marianas@pticom.com. Readers may also e-mail written questions through the Saipan Tribune at editor@saipantribune.com.*

## Letter to the Editor

# The tale spinner

One must give the devil its due. Carmen Fernandez is an incredible tale spinner. She can convince the Board of Regents, the Foundation, and others that black is white and white is black. The problem, of course, is that neither is true.

You do not put students first by getting rid of experienced instructors for politically expedient reasons. New instructors—no matter how good—take about two years to really know their job and their students. Some positions are easier to replace than others. The classes that Sam McPhetres taught are in many ways unique to the CNMI, and Sam is a recognized expert. Who has the education and experience to replace him? Fernandez can put a warm body in there with some kind of a Social Science degree, but that does not replace him. The students will be shortchanged again because Carmen says black is white.

Fernandez is also taking credit for getting NMC's WASC accreditation off of show-cause. I was there throughout the process, and that response does not tell the story. She was and is the smiley-face that is in every photo-op. Photo-ops do not get the job done. She is able to spin a tale for every situation, though many may be loaded with fiction. As for accreditation, who really did the work that pleased WASC, and got zero credit? Start with the two people who led the effort and did the most work: Dr. Debra Cabrera and Will Castro. They wrote most of the guidelines, the timelines, and the bulk of the final report. Dr. Deb conducted training sessions for the faculty and staff and met with the department chairs and other key people to keep the process moving. As a chair I can say that I was then able to point everybody in my department in the right direction so they could do the work. They did a great job. Re-accreditation was a result of a schoolwide team effort that was led by Dr. Cabrera. While her main responsibility was the academic side of the college, she and Will Castro did a lot to help the staff and administration.

Now Dr. Deb, Will, most of the department chairs, and other key people who shouldered the bulk of the re-accreditation work are gone. They have either not been renewed or they were pushed out by Fernandez. For those who believe that most of the people like Dr. Deb wanted to leave the college, you should also believe that black is white and white is black. Carmen's boot prints are all over most of those who left.

Because most of those who led the re-accreditation effort are gone, Fernandez is hiring highly paid consultants to do the work. The last report had almost no input from the faculty and staff. WASC representatives continually emphasized the importance of the college community doing the work so they would be true stakeholders. Now the leaders of the process are gone so Carmen only trusts outside consultants to do the job. This is a house of cards that could get the college back on probation.

No matter what Carmen smilingly says, black is not white and white is not black.

**Mark Haag**
*San Vicente, Saipan*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

# The Weather

## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

| TODAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| ▲86° ▼77° | ▲86° ▼77° | ▲86° ▼77° | ▲86° ▼77° | ▲86° ▼77° |

## Micronesia

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Cloudy | ▲84 | ▼76 |
| Palau | Mostly Cloudy | ▲85 | ▼77 |
| Yap | Showers | ▲86 | ▼77 |
| Chuuk | Mostly Cloudy | ▲89 | ▼81 |
| Pohnpei | Mostly Sunny | ▲87 | ▼74 |
| Kosrae | Showers | ▲87 | ▼80 |
| Majuro | Mostly Sunny | ▲86 | ▼78 |

## Around The Globe

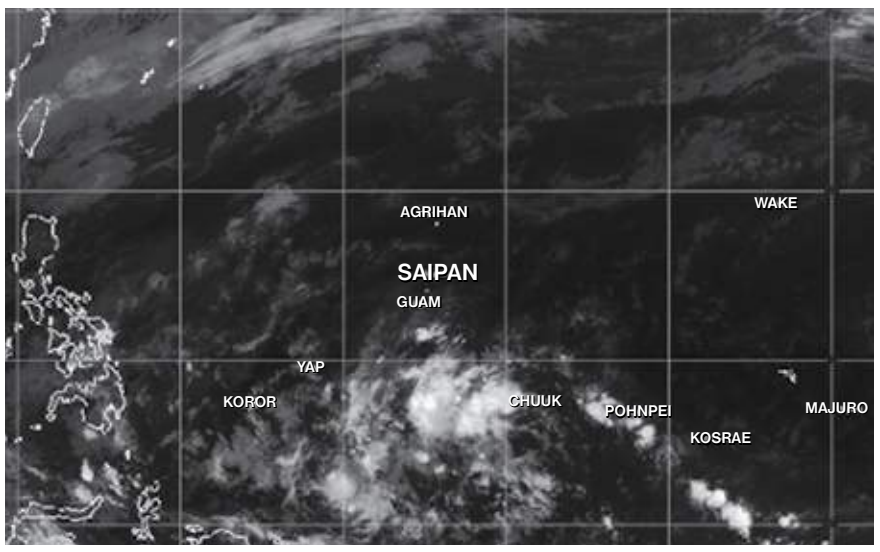
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Showers | ▲72 | ▼60 |
| Beijing | Partly Sunny | ▲27 | ▼10 |
| Hong Kong | Showers | ▲68 | ▼63 |
| Honolulu | Mostly Cloudy | ▲80 | ▼70 |
| London | Rain | ▲46 | ▼45 |
| Los Angeles | Cloudy | ▲64 | ▼46 |
| Manila | Sunny | ▲89 | ▼74 |
| Melbourne | Sunny | ▲79 | ▼57 |
| Miami | Mostly Cloudy | ▲71 | ▼58 |
| New York | Windy | ▲28 | ▼17 |
| Osaka | Cloudy | ▲46 | ▼34 |
| Paris | Rain | ▲50 | ▼47 |
| Pusan | Sunny | ▲44 | ▼28 |
| Rome | Rain | ▲59 | ▼53 |
| Salem | Showers | ▲42 | ▼38 |
| San Francisco | Mostly Cloudy | ▲52 | ▼47 |
| Seoul | Rain/Snow | ▲34 | ▼19 |
| Tokyo | Mostly Sunny | ▲50 | ▼41 |
| Washington, DC | Partly Sunny | ▲36 | ▼22 |

## Tides

**Saipan Harbor**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6:37 AM | Today | High Tide: | 1.7 Feet |
| 11:16 AM | Today | Low Tide: | 1.3 Feet |
| 4:28 PM | Today | High Tide: | 2.0 Feet |

## Yesterday's Satellite Image




**PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2009**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line cuts across the northwest corner of the discussion area from 25N140E to beyond 130E at 21N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 150 miles northwest of the shear line including Iwo To island. An old shear line reaches southwestward from west of the Northern Marianas at 18N140E to beyond 130E at 13N. Scattered showers are seen along and up to 150 miles northwest of this feature. A near-equatorial trough extends southeastward from south of Mindanao through 4N130E to end at EQ147E. Convergence near the trough is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Yap within 130 miles of a line from 7N138E to EQ144E. A low-level trough extends northward from 1N158E to 13N151E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough are present over Chuuk between 1N and 10N from 145E to 155E. Trade winds converging toward the trough are triggering scattered showers south of Pohnpei and Kosrae within 70 miles of a line from 3N156E to 4N161E to 1N166E to 2N169E. Cloudiness from earlier convection is evident over Koror between 5N and 9N from 131E to 136E and northeast of Tarawa Atoll within 100 miles of a line from 1N174E to 7N180.

## Sunrise/Sunset

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:42 AM | 5:56 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:42 AM | 5:57 PM |
| Thursday | 6:43 AM | 5:57 PM |
| Friday | 6:43 AM | 5:58 PM |
| Saturday | 6:43 AM | 5:58 PM |

## Moonrise/Moonset

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 3:16 PM | 3:43 AM |
| Wednesday | 4:16 PM | 4:46 AM |
| Thursday | 5:22 PM | 5:50 AM |
| Friday | 6:29 PM | 6:52 AM |
| Saturday | 7:35 PM | 7:49 AM |

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09597 | 11:30am | 12:05pm | 1, 7 |

**ROTA (ROP)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09597 | 12:40pm | 1:10pm | 1, 7 |

**SAIPAN-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09317 | 4:25am | 5:15am | Daily |
| C09313 | 8:30am | 9:20am | Daily |
| C09597 | 11:30am | 1:10pm | 1, 7 via ROP |
| C09601 | 12:20pm | 1:10pm | 4, 5 |
| C09603 | 3:15pm | 4:05pm | Daily |
| C09605 | 6:20pm | 7:10pm | Daily |
| C09599 | 9:20pm | 10:10pm | Daily |

**SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NW287 | 6:00am | 7:30pm | Daily via NRT |

**SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NW287 | 6:00am | 8:40am | Daily |
| NW297 | 4:45pm | 7:30pm | Daily |

**SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ608 | 3:20am | 6:50am | 1, 4, 5, 7 |

**SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ604 | 2:10am | 6:00am | 1 |
| OZ604 | 2:40am | 6:30am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| OZ119 | 4:00am | 11:25am | Daily via Osaka |
| | | Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am | |
| OZ606 | 3:20pm | 7:00pm | 2, 4, 6, 7 |

**SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FM844 | 2:50am | 5:40am | 2, 6 |

**SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CZ3008 | 3:30am | 6:40am | 2, 6 |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ604/701 | 2:10am | 11:50am | 1 via ICN |
| OZ604/701 | 2:40am | 11:50am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN |
| OZ604/703 | 2:50am | 11:25am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN |
| OZ608/705 | 3:20am | 1:30am+1 | 1, 5 via PUS |
| C09603/933 | 3:15pm | 9:40pm | Daily via GUM |
| C09605/933 | 6:20pm | 9:40pm | Daily via GUM |
| C09599/PR111 | 9:20pm | 7:50am+1 | 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM |

**SAIPAN-HONG KONG**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ604/721 | 2:10am | 12:00pm | 1 via ICN |
| OZ604/721 | 2:40am | 12:00pm | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN |
| OZ606/749 | 3:20pm | 11:00pm | 4, 6, 7 via ICN |

### ARRIVALS

**ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09598 | 3:10am | 3:45am | 5, 6 |
| C09312 | 1:20pm | 1:55pm | 6 |

**GUAM-ROTA (ROP)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09598 | 2:00am | 2:30am | 5, 6 |
| C09312 | 12:10pm | 12:40pm | 6 |

**GUAM-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| C09316 | 2:00am | 2:50am | 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 |
| C09598 | 2:00am | 3:45am | 5, 6 via ROP |
| C09596 | 7:00am | 7:50am | Daily |
| C09600 | 10:05am | 10:55am | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 |
| C09312 | 12:10pm | 1:55pm | 6 via ROP |
| C09602 | 1:50pm | 2:40pm | 1, 4, 5, 7 |
| C09604 | 4:50pm | 5:40pm | Daily |
| C09606 | 8:00pm | 8:50pm | Daily |

**NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NW288 | 12:05pm | 1:20am+1 | Daily via NRT |

**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NW298 | 10:05am | 2:50pm | Daily |
| NW288 | 8:45pm | 1:20am+1 | Daily |

**BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ607 | 9:00pm | 2:10am+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |

**SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ605 | 9:00am | 2:20pm | 2, 4, 6, 7 |
| OZ120 | 7:10pm | 2:20am+1 | Daily via Osaka |
| | | Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm | |
| OZ603 | 7:40pm | 1:10am+1 | 7 |
| OZ603 | 8:10pm | 1:30am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |

**SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FM843 | 7:15pm | 1:50am+1 | 1, 5 |

**GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CZ3007 | 7:30pm | 2:40am+1 | 1, 5 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ716/605 | 12:30am | 2:20pm | 4 via ICN |
| OZ706/607 | 3:35am | 2:10am+1 | 4, 7 via PUS |
| OZ702/603 | 1:10pm | 1:10am+1 | 7 via ICN |
| OZ702/603 | 1:10pm | 1:30am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN |
| PR110/C09596 | 10:10pm | 7:50am+1 | 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM |
| C0934/9596 | 11:10pm | 7:50am+1 | Daily via GUM |
| OZ704/605 | 11:55pm | 2:20pm+1 | 1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN |

**HONG KONG-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ724/605 | 12:30am | 2:20pm | 2,4,6,7 via ICN |
| OZ750/605 | 1:00am | 2:20pm | 2,4,6,7 via ICN |
| OZ722/603 | 1:30pm | 1:10am+1 | 7 via ICN |
| OZ722/603 | 1:30pm | 1:30am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN |

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

## FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

| Airline | ETD | ETA | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Guam-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 100 | 7:00am | 7:30am | Daily |
| **Rota-Saipan** | | | |
| FRE 100 | 7:50am | 8:20am | Daily |
| **Saipan-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 200 | 9:00am | 9:30am | Daily |
| **Rota-Guam** | | | |
| FRE 200 | 9:50am | 10:15am | Daily |
| **Guam-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 300 | 4:00pm | 4:30pm | Daily |
| **Rota-Saipan** | | | |
| FRE 300 | 4:50pm | 5:25pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Rota** | | | |
| FRE 400 | 6:00pm | 6:30pm | Daily |
| **Rota-Guam** | | | |
| FRE 400 | 6:45pm | 7:15pm | Daily |
| **Saipan-Tinian** | | | |
| FRE 101 | 6:45am | 6:55am | Daily |
| FRE 103 | 7:30am | 7:40am | Daily |
| FRE 105 | 8:00am | 8:10am | Daily |
| FRE 107 | 8:40am | 8:50am | Daily |
| FRE 109* | 9:10am | 9:20am | Daily |
| FRE 111* | 10:45am | 10:55am | Daily |

| Airline | ETD | ETA | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| FRE 113 | 11:40am | 11:50am | Daily |
| FRE 115 | 1:00pm | 1:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 117 | 2:30pm | 2:40pm | Daily |
| FRE 119 | 4:00pm | 4:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 121 | 4:40pm | 4:50pm | Daily |
| FRE 123 * | 5:40pm | 5:50pm | Daily |
| FRE 125 * | 6:00pm | 6:10pm | Daily |
| **Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**** | | | |
| FRE 102 | 7:05am | 7:15am | Daily |
| FRE 104 | 7:50am | 8:00am | Daily |
| FRE 106** | 8:20am | 8:30am | Daily |
| FRE 108** | 9:00am | 9:10am | Daily |
| FRE 110 | 10:00am | 10:10am | Daily |
| FRE 112 | 11:05am | 11:15am | Daily |
| FRE 114 | 12:00pm | 12:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 116 | 1:30pm | 1:40pm | Daily |
| FRE 118 | 2:50pm | 3:00pm | Daily |
| FRE 120** | 4:20pm | 4:30pm | Daily |
| FRE 122** | 5:00pm | 5:10pm | Daily |
| FRE 124 | 6:05pm | 6:15pm | Daily |
| FRE 126 | 6:20pm | 6:30pm | Daily |

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

**For announcements:**

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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# Business

## Shoppers spend a little more during holiday season

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Holiday shoppers spent a little more this season, according to data released Monday, giving merchants some reason for cheer.

The spending bounce means retailers managed to avoid a repeat of last year's disaster even amid tight credit and double-digit unemployment. Profits should be healthier, too, because stores had a year to plan their inventories to match consumer demand and never needed to resort to fire-sale clearances.

Retail sales rose 3.6 percent from Nov. 1 through Dec. 24, compared with a 2.3 percent drop in the year-ago period, according to figures from MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse, which track all forms of payment, including cash.

Adjusting for an extra shopping day between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the number was closer to a 1 percent gain.

Last year, the economy was in "critical condition," said Michael McNamara, vice president at MasterCard Advisors' SpendingPulse. "This year, it's in stable condition."

AP

Early morning shoppers, Bev Teames, center, and Richard Centeno, right, take advantage of a sale at Target in Colma, Calif., Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009.

A major winter storm that slammed the Northeast and shut in shoppers on the Saturday before Christmas derailed sales. But consumers appeared to have made up for the loss by shopping in advance of the storm and the days leading up to Christmas.

"We had a pretty decent surge," McNamara said.

Online sales were a particular hot spot, fueled by a big increase the weekend before Christmas. They rose 15.5 percent on the season, though they make up less than 10 percent of all retail sales.

One worrisome sign: Merchants are facing big hurdles to lure shoppers back in January amid lean inventories and what appear to be weak gift card sales. Gift card sales are recorded only when they are redeemed.

Stores count on a post-Christmas boost because of the growing importance of January on the retail sales calendar. Last year, the week after Christmas accounted for 15 percent of overall holiday sales, according to ShopperTrak, a research firm.

Retail consultant Burt P. Flickinger describes gift cards as "the lifeblood" of the post-Christmas season, because shoppers typically spend more than the value of the cards.

"Retailers with a disappointing December are going to need January to survive," Flickinger said. "Inventories are even too low for retailers."

Karen MacDonald, a spokeswoman at Taubman Centers Inc., said a survey among its centers this past weekend showed that merchants are on track to generate on average low single-digit sales increases from a year ago, though they still have a week to go.

MacDonald noted that the centers had a strong last-minute sales surge, and this past weekend, business has been strong. She added that 85 percent of shoppers are buying, 10 percent are exchanging and about 5 percent are returning items.

Gift card redemption rates have been discouraging this weekend, she said. They averaged 10 percent, based on a sampling of malls, she said. In good years, those rates are anywhere from 30 to 40 percent. That confirms that gift card sales were just "lukewarm," she said.

"Shoppers are seeing more value in deeply discounted merchandise" than buying gift cards, MacDonald said.

Ricki Smith, 30, of Prairie Village, Kan., had no returns and was hunting for bargains Saturday at the local Walmart store.

## House backers of public insurance option may yield

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Two House Democrats who favor a government insurance plan, a central element of health care legislation passed in their chamber, acknowledged Sunday it might have to be sacrificed as negotiators work out a final agreement with the Senate.

Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina, the No. 3 Democrat in the House and one who had appealed to President Barack Obama not to yield on the public plan, set out conditions for yielding himself.

Asked during rounds on the Sunday news shows whether he could vote for a final bill that does not embrace a public plan, Clyburn said: "Yes, sir, I can."

Clyburn added: "We want a public option to do basically three things: Create more choice for insurers, create more competition for insurance companies, and to contain costs. So if we can come up with a process by which these three things can be done, then I'm all for it. Whether or not we label it a public option or not is of no consequence."

While insisting "it's not dead," Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland said he recognizes realities in the Senate, where Democrats had to scrape up every vote from their side even to pass a bill without a government plan to compete in the private insurance marketplace.

"Before the House was to give up the public option, we would want to be persuaded that there are other mechanisms in whatever bill comes out that will keep down premiums," said Van Hollen, appearing to sketch out a bottom line without a government plan necessarily included. "We've got to make sure that the final product is affordable."

Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., underscored the divisions Democrats will need to bridge when negotiators from the House and Senate meet next month to reconcile the two bills. He said there will need to be more give on the House side than the Senate, which took weeks to find the 60 votes needed for passage.

"If we are going to have a final law, it will look a lot more like the Senate version than the House version," Menendez asserted.

The Senate's Christmas Eve achievement brought the nation closer than it's been for generations to a new order in health insurance, one that would eventually require nearly all Americans to get coverage, help many pay for it and restrict onerous insurance company practices such as denying coverage to people with pre-existing sickness.

## Seniors worry about Medicare Advantage cuts

**MIAMI** (AP)—Insurers constantly caution seniors that their Medicare Advantage perks such as hearing aids, dental payments and even gym memberships will fizzle if Democrats get their way and cut government subsidies for them.

But tens of billions of Medicare dollars funneled through insurers also pay for extras that never reach beneficiaries: multimillion-dollar salaries, executive retreats in Hawaii, Scotland and Cancun, and massive expenditures on marketing to lure more customers to the privately administered Advantage plans that serve as an alternative to government-provided Medicare.

The government-subsidized benefits that seniors on Advantage plans receive—often at premiums lower than Medicare premiums—are real, and are legitimately in danger in some cases if Democrats succeed in their health care overhaul.

Medicare Advantage subsidies are on the chopping block to pay for the overhaul. Though there are marked differences between House and Senate versions, both bills would lower payments to private Medicare Advantage plans, which on average cost the government 14 percent more than traditional Medicare.

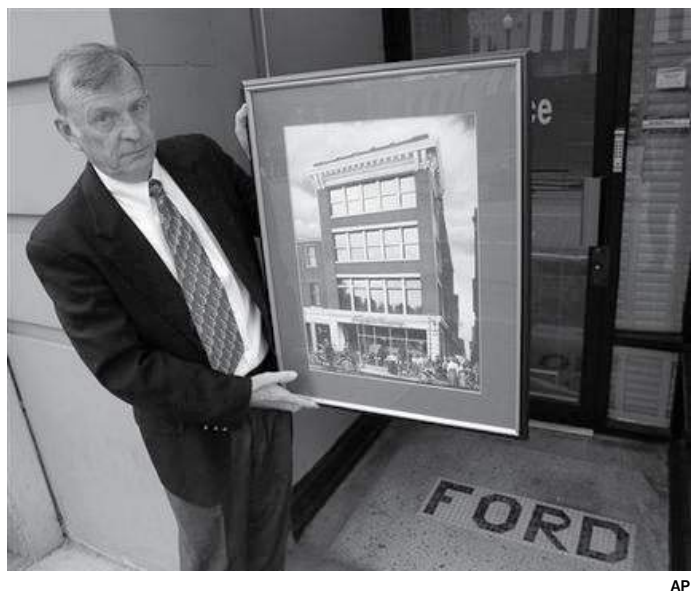
The harshest critics of the Advantage program say patients are exchanging hassle-free coverage for a plan with cheap perks that may ultimately deny them necessary treatment.

## Car showrooms are reborn as places to play, learn

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** (AP)—With hard times in the auto industry and car dealerships closing around the country, the gleaming showrooms that once featured next year's models are becoming this year's new store, restaurant, school, day care center or yoga studio.

In Lane County, Ore., Joe Softich from Catholic Community Services helps erect shelves and unload boxes for a new food bank warehouse inside a former auto showroom. In Tulsa, Okla., teenagers at Northside Christian Church skateboard in what was once a showroom's auto service center.

Students on the campus of the Columbus College of Art & Design in Ohio can learn in a space where evidence of automaking's proud past is still visible in the exposed concrete pillars, sturdy tile floors and ascending spiral vehicle ramp.




AP

In this Oct. 6, 2009 photo, Sean Donovan displays a painting that shows how the private residence building he is standing in front of originally looked when it was built by Henry Ford to display Model T Ford automobiles in Cincinnati.

Architects and historians say the shock that American automakers could go bankrupt has combined with depressed real estate values and enthusiasm for green energy to bring a unique level of interest to reusing showrooms.

People are reducing their reliance on cars to save money on gas and shrink their carbon footprint; they are renovating showrooms because relying on recycled water or solar energy makes it cheaper to renovate than to build new.

"If you look historically at the times when we've had these big shifts in (building) use, they've coincided with societal shifts," said Erin Rae Hoffer, an architect on staff at Boston-based Autodesk.

The number of franchised new car dealerships in the U.S. was already slipping before the auto company bankruptcies, but 1,900 dealerships have closed since January 2008. U.S. auto sales fell to a 26-year low of about 10 million this year, compared with 17 million over most of the previous decade.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Oil extends gains above $78 in Asia

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia** (AP)—Oil prices extended gains above $78 a barrel Monday in Asia ahead of inventory figures later in the week that could send it through the $80 mark. Benchmark crude for February delivery rose 48 cents to $78.53 at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Trading was thin due to the holiday season. The contract rose $1.38 to settle at $78.05 on Thursday, the first time in more than a month that it closed above $78. Oil markets were closed on Friday for Christmas.

### Asian stocks rise amid jump in Japan production

**BANGKOK** (AP)—Asian stock markets rose Monday as a jump in Japan's factory production suggested the region's economic recovery is gathering pace. Markets in Asia were the first to resume trading after the Christmas holiday and investors focused on regional developments in the absence of cues from the U.S. or Europe. Oil prices, meanwhile, extended gains above $78 a barrel and the dollar was stronger against the yen and the euro.

# Nation

# Bomb suspect came from elite family, best schools

**LAGOS, Nigeria** (AP)—As a member of an uppercrust Nigerian family, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab received the best schooling, from the elite British International School in West Africa to the vaunted University College London.

But the education he wanted was of a different sort: Nigerian officials say his interest in extremist Islam prompted his father to warn U.S. authorities. As Abdulmutallab was being escorted in handcuffs off the Detroit-bound airliner he attempted to blow up on Christmas Day, he told U.S. officials that he had sought an extremist education at an Islamist hotbed in Yemen.

A portrait emerged Sunday of a serious young man who led a privileged life as the son of a prominent banker, but became estranged from his family as an adult. Devoutly religious, he was nicknamed "The Pope" for his saintly aura and gave few clues in his youth that he would turn radical, friends and family said.

"In all the time I taught him we never had cross words," said Michael Rimmer, a Briton who taught history at the British International School in Lome, Togo. "Somewhere along the line he must have met some sort of fanatics, and they must have turned his mind."

Abdulmutallab has been charged with trying to destroy a Northwest flight on Christmas Day with 278 passengers and 11 crew members on board. The detonator on his explosive apparently malfunctioned and he was subdued by other passengers.

Through an official, Abdulmutallab's father "expressed deep shock and regret over his son's actions."

His family home sits in the city of Funtua, in the heart of Nigeria's Islamic culture. Religion figured into the family's life: His father, Alhaji Umar Mutallab, who had a successful career in commercial banking, also joined the board of an Islamic bank—one that avoids the kind of interest payments banned by the Quran.

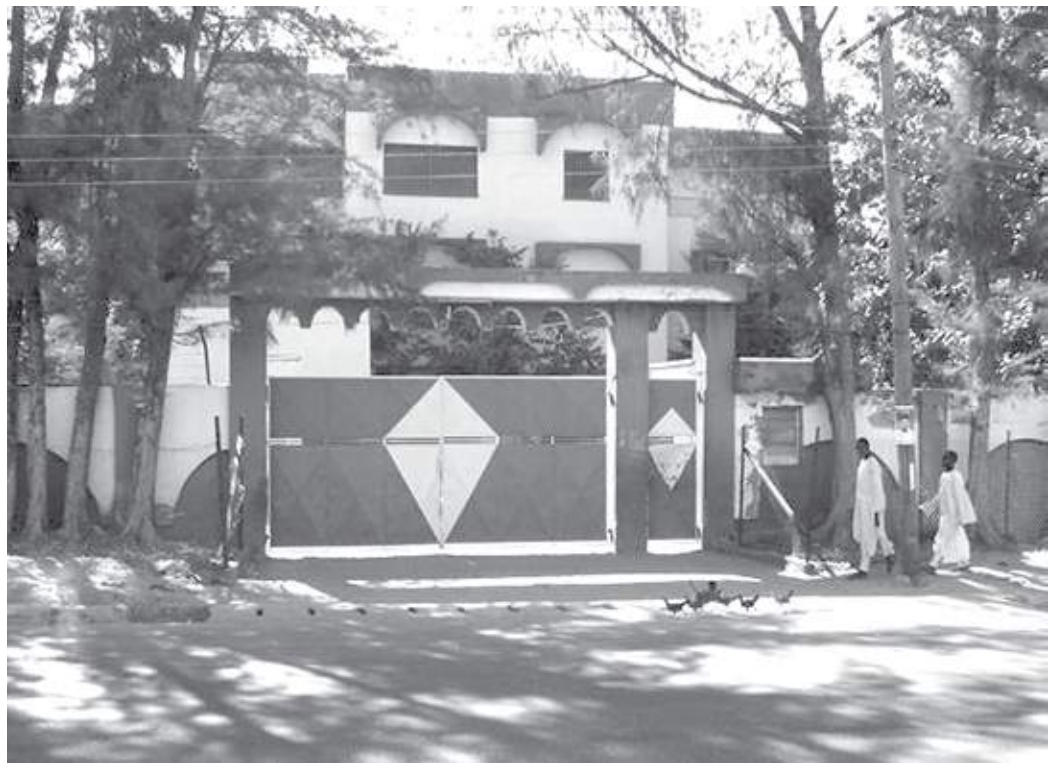
The large house, surrounded by a wall and a metal fence just off the main road running through the city, stood empty, a common occurrence for a jet-set family that sought an education abroad for Abdulmutallab. Family members told The Associated Press they could not comment but expected the family to issue a statement.

Mutallab was working with the FBI and not expected to grant media interviews, Information Minister Dora Akunyili said.

The elder Mutallab was "a responsible and respected Nigerian, with a true Nigerian spirit," she said. He had been estranged from his son for several months and alerted U.S. officials last month about the youth's growing hardline Islamic religious beliefs.

A close neighbor told the AP he believed Abdulmutallab did not get his extremist ideas from his family or from within Nigeria.

Basiru Sani Hamza, 35, said Abdulmutallab was a "very religious" and a "very obedient" to his parents as a boy in the well-to-do banking family.



AP

Unidentified men walk in front of the house of Alhaji Umar Abdul Mutallab, the father of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the alleged Christmas Day terrorist, in Funtua, Katsina state, Nigeria, Sunday Dec. 27, 2009.

## Security reviews under way after airliner attack

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Investigators piecing together a brazen attempt to bring down a trans-Atlantic airliner said Sunday the suspect tucked a small bag holding his deadly concoction on his body, using an explosive that would have been easily detected with the right airport equipment.

His success in smuggling and partially igniting the material on Friday's flight to Detroit prompted the Obama administration to promise a sweeping review of aviation security.

Adding to the airborne jitters, a second Nigerian man was detained Sunday from the same Northwest flight to Detroit after he locked himself in the plane's bathroom. Officials reported that he was belligerent but genuinely sick, and that, in an abundance of caution, the plane was taken to a remote location for screening before passengers were let off.

Investigators concluded he posed no threat. Despite the government's decision after the attempted Friday attack to mobilize more air marshals, none was on the Sunday flight from Amsterdam, according to a government report obtained by The Associated Press.

Stiffer boarding measures met passengers at gates as authorities warned travelers to expect extra delays returning home from holidays. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs announced a review of air safety on two broad fronts, saying the government will investigate its systems for placing suspicious travelers on watch lists and for detecting explosives before passengers board flights.

Both lines of defense were breached in an improbable series of events Christmas Day that spanned three continents and culminated in a struggle and fire aboard a Northwest jet shortly before its safe landing in Detroit. Law enforcement officials believed the suspect tried to ignite a two-part concoction of PETN and possibly a glycol-based liquid explosive, setting off popping, smoke and some fire but no deadly detonation.

Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 23, an Islamic devotee once dubbed "the Pope" as a sign of respect by classmates, was released from a Michigan hospital in the custody of federal marshals Sunday after being treated for burns. He is charged with attempting to destroy an aircraft and placing a destructive device in a plane.

# Percy Sutton, Harlem political pioneer, dies at 89

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Percy Sutton, the pioneering civil rights attorney who represented Malcolm X before launching successful careers as a political power broker and media mogul, has died. He was 89.

Marissa Shorenstein, a spokeswoman for Gov. David Paterson, confirmed that Sutton died Saturday. She did not know the cause. His daughter, Cheryl Sutton, declined to comment Saturday when reached by phone at her New York City home.

The son of a former slave, Percy Sutton became a fixture on 125th Street in Harlem after moving to New York City following his service with the famed Tuskegee Airmen in World War II. His Harlem law office, founded in 1953, represented Malcolm X and the slain activist's family for decades.

The consummate politician, Sutton served in the New York State Assembly before taking over as Manhattan borough president in 1966, becoming the highest-ranking black elected official in the state.

Sutton also mounted unsuccessful campaigns for the U.S. Senate and mayor of New York, and served as political mentor for the Rev. Jesse Jackson's two presidential races.

AP

Percy Sutton, who rescued the Apollo Theater in New York City from extinction eight years ago, poses under the Marquee in this July, 1991 file photo.

Jackson recalled Sutton talking about electing a black president as early as 1972. Sutton was influential in getting his 1984 campaign going, he said.

"He never stopped building bridges and laying the groundwork," Jackson said Sunday. "We are very glad to be the beneficiaries of his work."

In a statement released Saturday night, Gov. David Paterson called Sutton a mentor and "one of New York's and this nation's most influential African-American leaders."

"Percy was fiercely loyal, compassionate and a truly kind soul," Paterson said. "He will be missed but his legacy lives on through the next generations of African-Americans he inspired to pursue and fulfill their own dreams and ambitions."

President Barack Obama called Sutton "a true hero" to African-Americans across the country.

"His life-long dedication to the fight for civil rights and his career as an entrepreneur and public servant made the rise of countless young African-Americans possible," Obama said in a statement.

In 1971, with his brother Oliver, Sutton purchased WLIB-AM, making it the first black-owned radio station in New York City. His Inner City Broadcasting Corp. eventually picked up WBLS-FM, which reigned for years as New York's top-rated radio station, before buying stations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit and San Antonio between 1978-85.

The Texas purchase marked a homecoming for the suave and sophisticated Sutton, born in San Antonio on Nov. 24, 1920, the youngest of 15 children.

Among Sutton's other endeavors was his purchase and renovation of the famed Apollo Theater when the Harlem landmark's demise appeared imminent.

## ACROSS THE NATION

### Indian tribes buy back thousands of acres of land

**OMAHA, Neb.** (AP)—Native American tribes tired of waiting for the U.S. government to honor centuries-old treaties are buying back land where their ancestors lived and putting it in federal trust. Native Americans say the purchases will help protect their culture and way of life by preserving burial grounds and areas where sacred rituals are held. They also provide land for farming, timber and other efforts to make the tribes self-sustaining. Tribes put more than 840,000 acres—or roughly the equivalent of the state of Rhode Island—into trust from 1998 to 2007, according to information The Associated Press obtained from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs under the Freedom of Information Act.

### 9 fires in western Massachusetts leave 2 dead

**NORTHAMPTON, Mass.** (AP)—Authorities say nine fires that left two people dead in a western Massachusetts town are "suspicious" and they're treating them as potential crimes. Federal, state and local fire and police investigators are trying to determine what caused the fires, which local District Attorney Elizabeth D. Scheibel says are suspicious. Scheibel says the fires broke out in the downtown area of Northampton, Mass., between 2 a.m. and 3:15 a.m. Sunday. She says five fires were in buildings and the rest in cars. The two victims were found on the first floor of a house that was engulfed in fire. Police have not identified them.

### Alaska tug that ran into reef towed into port

**VALDEZ, Alaska** (AP)—A crippled tugboat that spilled fuel into Alaska's Prince William Sound after hitting the same reef that caused the *Exxon Valdez* oil disaster 20 years ago reached port early Sunday morning, a spokesman for the tug's owner said. The *Pathfinder* arrived under tow into *Valdez*, and crews will now work to determine how much diesel fuel spilled into the bay after the tug ran aground on Wednesday, Crowley Maritime Services spokesman Jim Butler said. The Coast Guard said that two of the tug's tanks—containing an estimated 33,500 gallons of diesel fuel—were damaged. In *Valdez*, responders were checking the stability of the *Pathfinder* in preparation to begin removal of about 93,000 gallons of fuel from seven of the vessel's eight undamaged tanks.

# Asia

# Thailand starts action to send Hmong back to Laos

**PHETCHABUN, Thailand** (AP)—Thailand early Monday morning launched an operation to close a refugee camp and send some 4,000 ethnic Hmong back to Laos, despite concerns about their safety.

Col. Thana Charuwat, the Thai Army's field coordinator for the operation, said it began at 5:30 a.m. Monday morning (2230 GMT Sunday), and involved a total of 5,000 troops.

He said the soldiers were unarmed, but equipped with shields and batons, which he described as meeting international standards for dealing with such situations, where people are being moved back against their will.

Many of the Hmong claim they face persecution in their homeland because of its communist government's alleged antagonism toward them. Hmong hill tribe people fought on the side of a pro-American government during the Vietnam War, but the communist side—popularly known in the West as the Pathet Lao—emerged triumphant in 1975.

Thailand claims most of the Hmong at the camp have no legitimate claim to refugee status, but are simply economic migrants who have entered the country illegally.

AP

Hmong peoples look out as they sit on the back of a truck leaving their refugee camp in Phetchabun province, Thailand, on Monday, Dec. 28, 2009.

Shortly before 5 a.m. (2200 GMT Sunday), journalists staying at a press center about 7 miles (12 kilometers) from the camp observed at least two dozen trucks head toward the refugee camp. There appeared to be about 20 soldiers on each truck. A large contingent of troops were already inside the camp, which has been sealed off to journalists and other outsiders.

Thana said the army hoped to complete the operation within 24 hours. He said the Hmong would be taken to a nearby staging area where they would be put on buses, which would take them to the Thai border town of Nong Khai, and then across to Laos, with their destination there being Paksane district in the central province of Bolikhamsai.

Human rights groups warned earlier that the planned expulsion could turn violent. Thana said the army's initial action would be an effort to have the Hmong agree to be sent back voluntarily.

Sunai Phasuk, a Thai representative for the New York-based group Human Rights Watch, said mobile phone signals inside the camp had been jammed so nobody could call out. Rights groups fear the Hmong will resist the deportation, as they have during smaller-scale repatriations.

According to Human Rights Watch, one of several groups trying to monitor the situation, soldiers, police and other security personnel were mobilized near the camp and told to wear body armor. There also were reports that 100 trucks and buses were standing by.

"It never happens smoothly," Sunai said. "If the Hmong resist it and there is an eruption of violence, the army may react in full force."

Thai government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn said earlier that Bangkok has secured an agreement with Laos to repatriate the group before the end of the year.

The United States and human rights groups have expressed concern about their expulsion, saying some of the Hmong could qualify for refugee status and should not be sent back.

Laos has in the past denied the Hmong are Lao citizens, describing them as Thailand's problem, though Bangkok says Laos has agreed to take this group back.

The Thai government has sought to quiet international concerns, saying measures will be taken to ensure that human rights are not violated.

"We have assurances from the top level of Laos that these people will be safe and sound," Panitan said.

## WORLD BRIEFS

### China rescues hijacked ship, crew in Indian ocean

**BEIJING** (AP)—A hijacked Chinese cargo ship and 25 sailors were rescued Monday, two months after they were seized by pirates off the lawless Somali coast, Chinese state media said. The official Xinhua News Agency said the ship and crew were now under the protection of a Chinese naval fleet after an early morning rescue but didn't say if the ship was retaken by force or if a ransom was paid. Once pirates are aboard a targeted vessel, naval forces do not usually try to intervene for fear of hostages being killed or wounded. Ransoms are commonly paid to free the captured ships.

### Vietnamese court convicts dissident of subversion

**THAI BINH, Vietnam** (AP)—A Vietnamese court convicted a former army officer who had pressed for democratic reforms of subversion Monday and sentenced him to 5.5 years in prison as Vietnam stepped up its efforts to crack down on dissent. Tran Anh Kim, 60, was accused of "working to overthrow the state" by joining the Democratic Party of Vietnam, publishing pro-democracy articles on the Internet, and joining Bloc 8406, an organization that promotes a multiparty state. Kim could have faced the death penalty, but prosecutors sought a lenient sentence, citing his distinguished military record and cooperative attitude.

### 125 pilot whales die on NZ beaches, 43 saved

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** (AP)—Some 125 pilot whales died in New Zealand after stranding on the beach over the weekend—but vacationers and conservation workers Sunday managed to coax 43 others back out to sea. Rescuers monitored the survivors as they swam away from Colville Beach on North Island's Coromandel peninsula, and by Monday morning they were reported well out to sea. Department of Conservation workers and hundreds of volunteers helped re-float the 43 whales at high tide. The volunteers covered the stranded mammals in sheets and kept them wet through the day.

# Pakistan suicide bombing death toll rises to 8

**ISLAMABAD** (AP)—The death toll from a suicide bombing at a Shiite Muslim gathering in the capital of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir increased to eight Monday, police said, as minority Shiites marked the key holy day of Ashura.

Another 80 people were wounded in Sunday night's bombing in Muzaffarabad—a rare sectarian attack in an area police say has little history of militant violence. The dead included three police, said police official Yasin Baig, adding that another 10 police were among the wounded.

The suicide bomber set off explosives he was carrying as police searched him outside a ceremony commemorating the seventh century death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, held every year on Ashura at the start of the Islamic holy month of Muharram.

Security has been tightened across Pakistan during Muharram, which is often marred by bombings and fighting between Pakistan's Sunni Muslim majority and its Shiite minority.

Baig said Shiite mourners at the commemoration ceremony in Muzaffarabad took to the streets after the attack to protest the bombing, with some firing shots in the air. Baig said authorities restored order within about an hour. He said it was the first time a suicide bomber attacked a Shiite gathering in the region.

Muslim militants have fought for decades to free Kashmir, which is split between India and Pakistan and claimed by both, from New Delhi's rule. But while Muzaffarabad has served as a base for anti-India insurgents to train and launch attacks, the capital—and most of the Pakistani side—has largely been spared any violence, with militants focusing on the Indian-controlled portion.

The bombing highlights the growing extremism of militants in Pakistani Kashmir. Many of the region's armed groups were started with support from Islamabad. But some of them have turned against their former patrons and joined forces with the Taliban because the government has reduced its support under U.S. pressure.

The partnership is a dangerous development for Pakistan as it could enable the Taliban to carry out attacks more easily outside its sanctuary in the country's tribal areas in the northwest. More than 500 people have been killed in retaliatory attacks since the military launched a major anti-Taliban offensive in mid-October in the militant stronghold of South Waziristan near the Afghan border.

# China finds likely tomb of 3rd century general

**BEIJING** (AP)—Chinese archaeologists have found what could be the tomb of Cao Cao, a skillful general and ruler in the 3rd century who was later depicted in popular folklore as the archetypal cunning politician.

Archaeological officials say Cao's 8,000-square feet (740-square meter) tomb complex, with a 130-feet (40-meter) passage leading to an underground chamber, was found in Xigaoxue, a village near the ancient capital of Anyang in central Henan province, according to the official China Daily newspaper.

Historians say Cao Cao's outstanding military and political talents enabled him to build the strongest and most prosperous state in northern China during the Three Kingdoms period in 208 to 280 A.D., when China had three separate rulers.

Characters based on Cao are depicted as shrewd and unscrupulous villains in traditional Chinese operas and in one of China's best-loved historical novels, "Romance of The Three Kingdoms." In the fictionalized account, Cao says, "Better for me to wrong the world than for the world to wrong me."

The common saying in Chinese "speak of Cao Cao and Cao Cao arrives" is the equivalent of the English expression "speak of the devil." Cao was also a prolific poet.

# Activist: US missionary likely detained in NKorea

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—An American missionary is believed to be in North Korean custody after he illegally entered the communist nation on Christmas Day in an attempt to call attention to the reclusive country's human rights conditions, an activist said Sunday.

AP

In this photo taken on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2009, and released from Freedom and Life for All North Koreans, U.S. missionary Robert Park, a 28-year-old Korean-American, who crossed the frozen Tumen River into North Korea from China on Christmas Day, is seen in a rally in Seoul, South Korea.

Robert Park, 28, slipped across the frozen Tumen River into the North from China on Friday. There has been no word from him since, but an activist who knows Park said he was likely arrested quickly by border guards or police in the authoritarian state.

"We haven't heard anything about him since he went there," said the activist, a member of the Seoul-basedgroup Pax Koreana, which promotes human rights in the North. "But it's North Korea. We presume he has been arrested there."

Analysts said North Korea would most likely expel the Christian missionary instead of holding him as a negotiating card because that would serve his purpose of highlighting the regime's human rights abuses.

The communist country's state-run media did not mention Park's case Sunday. The U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Beijing said they were aware of the incident but had no details.

Park, who is of Korean descent, was carrying a letter urging leader Kim Jong Il to step down and free all political prisoners, the activist said.

"I am an American citizen. I brought God's love. God loves you and God bless you," Park reportedly said in fluent Korean as he crossed over near the northeastern city of Hoeryong, according to the Pax Koreana activist.

# World

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Bombs kill 7 Shiite pilgrims in Iraq

**BAGHDAD** (AP)—A bomb killed five Shiite pilgrims in a procession in northeast Iraq on Sunday and blasts in Baghdad killed two more pilgrims as millions of people marched to commemorate the most important Shiite religious observance. Pilgrims traveling to the southern holy city of Karbala have come under repeated attack during the 10-day religious ceremonies that culminated Sunday with huge processions. Dozens of pilgrims have been killed and more than 150 wounded during the Ashoura observance by insurgents hoping to intensify sectarian violence that reached a peak in 2006 and 2007, though the pace of violence has dropped sharply since then.

### Libya accuses Swiss of abusing Gadhafi son

**TRIPOLI, Libya** (AP)—Libya on Friday accused Swiss authorities of using excessive force during the arrest of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's son in Switzerland last year, deepening a diplomatic standoff between the two countries. The Libyan Foreign Ministry issued a list of 27 grievances connected to the arrest of Hannibal Gadhafi, who was apprehended with his wife in July 2008 for allegedly beating up their servants in a Geneva hotel. Gadhafi and his wife were released on bail three days later and returned to Libya. In a document posted on the ministry's Web site, Libya accused Swiss authorities of breaking down a door during the arrest, pointing a gun at him and using 20 armed men to take him away.

### Priest: 7 migrants killed in Suriname violence

**PARAMARIBO, Suriname** (AP)—At least seven foreign migrants are dead and hundreds more homeless after rioting and attacks against migrant workers in Suriname left a border town in ashes, a Brazilian priest aiding victims said Sunday. The Rev. Jose Vergilio said the riots in the town of Albina, which began late Thursday after a Brazilian allegedly stabbed a local man to death, have made the area uninhabitable for an estimated 300 people who fled. Police have only confirmed one death without providing details. Vergilio's account suggested a higher toll, although the nationality of the dead migrants was unclear.

# Iran: Opposition leader condemns protester deaths

**TEHRAN, Iran** (AP)—An Iranian opposition leader on Monday condemned the killing of protesters during Shiite Islam's most important observance, saying the government was even more brutal than the cruel regime that was ousted by the Islamic Revolution three decades ago.

Mahdi Karroubi, a candidate who lost in June's disputed presidential election, posted a statement on an opposition Web asking how the government could spill the blood of its people on the sacred day of Ashoura. He said even the former government of the hated Shah respected the holy day.

"What has really happened? They (the ruling system) spilled the blood of people on the day of Ashoura and gets a group of savage individuals confronting people," Karroubi said on the pro-reform Rah-e-Sabz Web site. The shah, who was overthrown in 1979, was widely hated and comparing a rival to him is a major, though not uncommon, insult in Iranian politics.

The violence erupted Sunday when security forces fired on stone-throwing protesters in the center of Tehran. Opposition Web sites and witnesses say at least five people were killed, making it one of the bloodiest confrontations in months. The dead included a nephew of chief opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, according to Mousavi's Web site, Kaleme.ir.

Police have denied using firearms, but the clashes were sure to deepen antagonism between the government and a reform movement that has shown resilience in the face of repeated crackdowns since the June election.

Some accounts of the violence Sunday in Tehran were vivid and detailed, but they could not be independently confirmed because of government restrictions on media coverage. Police said dozens of officers were injured and more than 300 protesters were arrested.

The street chaos coincided with commemorations of Ashoura, fueling protesters' defiance with its message of sacrifice and dignity in the face of coercion. The observance commemorates the 7th-century death in battle of one of Shiite Islam's most beloved saints.

Still, many demonstrators had not anticipated such harsh tactics by the authorities, despite police warnings of tougher action against any protests on the sacred day.

Amateur video footage purportedly from the center of Tehran showed an enraged crowd carrying away one casualty, chanting, "I'll kill, I'll kill the one who killed my brother." In several locations, demonstrators confronted security forces, hurling stones and setting their motorcycles, cars and vans ablaze, according to video footage and pro-reform Web sites.

Protesters tried to cut off roads with burning barricades. One police officer was photographed with blood streaming down his face after he was set upon by the crowd.

There were unconfirmed reports that four people died in protests in Tabriz in northwest Iran, the Rah-e-Sabz Web site said. Fierce clashes also broke out in Isfahan and Najafabad in central Iran and Shiraz in the south, it said.

The protests began with thousands of opposition supporters chanting "Death to the dictator," a reference to hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as they marched in defiance of official warnings of a harsh crackdown on any demonstrations coinciding with Ashoura.

AP

Iranian mourners circle around a tent which is set on fire, in a ceremony commemorating Shiites' holy day of Ashoura, in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009, marking the death of Imam Hussein, a grand son of Islam's prophet Mohammed, who was killed in a 680 A.D. battle at Karbala in Iraq.

# Airliner plot raises fears about al-Qaida in Yemen

**RIYADH, Saudi Arabia** (AP)—A Nigerian man's claim that his attempt to blow up a U.S. plane originated with al-Qaida's network inside Yemen deepened concerns that instability in the Middle Eastern country is providing the terror group with a base to train and recruit militants for operations against the West and the U.S.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab has been charged with trying to destroy a Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines flight on Christmas day in a botched attempt to detonate explosives. The 23-year-old claimed to have received training and instructions from al-Qaida operatives in Yemen, a U.S. law enforcement official said on condition of anonymity because the investigation was still ongoing.

If confirmed, it would be the second known case recently by the relatively new group, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, of exporting terrorism out of Yemen—a country with a weak central government, many lawless areas and plentiful supplies of weapons. But Yemen, the ancestral home of Osama bin Laden, has long been an al-Qaida stomping ground.

In August, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula tried to assassinate Saudi Arabia's counterterrorism chief, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, in a suicide bombing in an attack that bore similarities to the airliner plot. The explosive device Abdulmutallab used was attached to his body, just below his torso. The Saudi attacker is believed to have attached the explosives to his groin or inserted them inside his body.

According to U.S. court documents, a preliminary analysis of the device used by Abdulmutallab showed it contained PETN, a high explosive also known as pentaerythritol. The same material is believed to have been used in the August attack in Saudi Arabia by Abdullah Hassan Tali al-Asiri, who had traveled to Yemen to connect with the al-Qaida franchise there. PETN was also what convicted shoe bomber Richard Reid used when he tried to destroy a trans-Atlantic flight in 2001.

The botched attack on the U.S. plane came a day after Yemeni forces, with the help of U.S. intelligence, launched the second of two major air and ground assaults on major al-Qaida hideouts in Yemen. At least 64 militants were killed in the two operations.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula said in a statement, dated from last week and posted online Sunday, that the first airstrike was conducted by American jets. The group urged followers to attack U.S. military bases, embassies and naval forces in the region.

# Hamas marks 1 year after war, but many stay home

**JEBALIYA, Gaza Strip** (AP)—A meager turnout at a well-publicized Hamas rally Sunday to mark a year since Israel's devastating Gaza offensive appeared to reflect public despair over grinding poverty, stalled reconstruction and discontent over the militant Islamic group's attempt to turn the occasion into a victory march.

Only about 3,000 people milled around a square in the northern Gaza town of Jebaliya, well below expectations, and other events during the day were also poorly attended.

Israel launched its punishing three-week campaign of air strikes and ground incursions on Dec. 27, 2008, saying the operation was meant to stop years of rocket attacks from Gaza.

The war left about 1,400 Palestinians dead, including many civilians, and brought heavy international criticism on Israel, including accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a U.N. investigation. Thirteen Israelis were also killed in the conflict, and Hamas also faces war crimes allegations.

"Gaza was victorious. Yes, Gaza was victorious with its steadfastness, its firmness and strength of faith," said Gaza Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in a televised speech.

But the Hamas call to rally was met with indifference. Ignoring a siren meant to call for a minute's silence, cars whizzed by and pedestrians kept walking.

"I wish they had commemorated the war by opening a factory. That would have been better than this," said Gaza resident Rami Mohammed, 30.

Most reconstruction of thousands of damaged buildings has been blocked by a tight Israeli-Egyptian blockade around the territory that followed the Hamas surge to power in 2007. Poverty, always a prominent feature of Palestinian life, is even more grinding now in the wake of the winter war.

# Pope presses the flesh, visits Rome soup kitchen

**VATICAN CITY** (AP)—Pope Benedict XVI waded into a crowd of well-wishers in Rome on Sunday, just days after he was knocked down by a woman at a Christmas Eve Mass.

It the 82-year-old pontiff's first appearance outside the Vatican since the attack, which left him unhurt but raised security concerns.

Security was tight but Benedict greeted well-wishers as usual. He kissed some children and caressed the hands of others as he entered a soup kitchen operated by the Sant'Egidio Community, a lay Catholic group based in Rome, a few miles (kilometers) from the Vatican.

Many in the crowd applauded, some shouting "Viva il Papa!" or "Long Live the Pope!"

The pope has kept up his busy holiday schedule despite the incident, in which a woman jumped a barricade in St. Peter's Basilica and pulled the pope to the ground as she was taken down by guards.

Benedict got up quickly and celebrated the Mass. The next morning, he delivered his traditional Christmas Day message.

The Vatican said the woman was mentally unstable and identified her as 25-year-old Susanna Maiolo, a Swiss-Italian national. She remains in a clinic for treatment.

It was the second time the same woman had jumped the barrier at a Christmas Eve Mass. In 2008, she failed to get to the pope.

The Vatican said it would review security procedures. But spokesman the Rev. Federico Lombardi also said the Vatican could not ensure the pope's security 100 percent, because he is regularly surrounded by tens of thousands of people for his weekly audiences, Masses, papal greetings and other events.

On Sunday, the pope delivered the traditional Angelus prayer from his studio window overlooking St. Peter's Square before traveling to the soup kitchen in Rome's Trastevere neighborhood.

There, he shared lasagna, meatballs with lentils and mashed potatoes with the poor and later gave Christmas presents to about 30 children at the center.

# Overdrive

## NUTS & BOLTS

### THE BOTTOM LINE
Ford is finding its way back to the hearts of car lovers. The Taurus SHO, an all-around excellent piece of automotive work, competitive on all levels with everything in its class, and actually better in many cases, is proof. But is it too much to ask that desirable increases in car quality be given to us without sizable increases in cost?

### COMPLAINT
This one comes from the Bureau of Wanting Everything. Increased acceleration and superior handling are nice. But can we get them with increased fuel economy and decreased purchase cost?

### RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
Ride and acceleration are excellent. Handling is among best in class. Driving this one is pure joy.

### HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
The 2010 Taurus SHO and its siblings retain much of the boxy rear end of the predecessor Ford 500 sedan. But the severe linearity of the old has been relieved and rendered attractive by the clever, sleek front-end sculpting of the new. Also, thumbs up to the designers who developed the grille for the new Taurus line. It's pleasantly distinctive.

### BODY STYLE/LAYOUT
The 2010 Taurus SHO is a full-size, front-engine, all-wheel-drive, high-performance family sedan. Other Taurus models are front-wheel-drive.

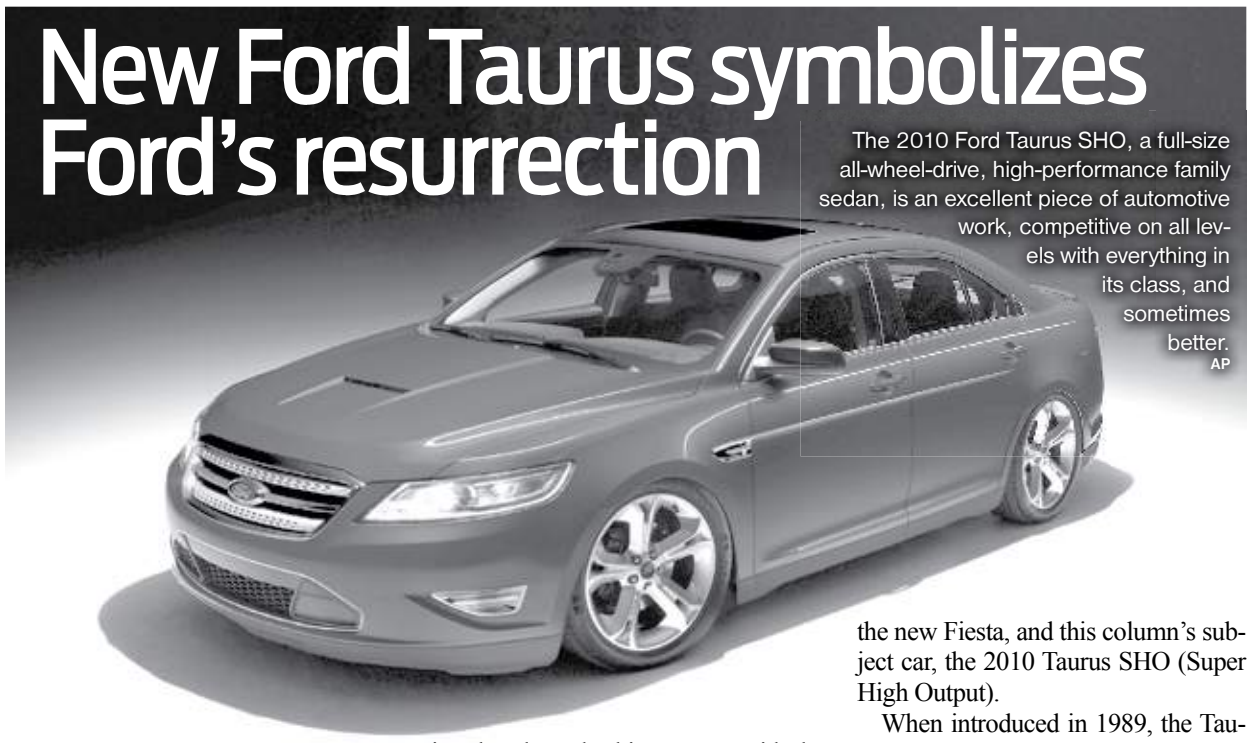
### ENGINE/TRANSMISSION
The new Taurus SHO comes with a 3.5-liter, 24-valve, twin-turbocharged (thus, all of that extra forced air) V-6 engine that develops 365 horsepower at 5,500 rpm and 250 foot-pounds of torque at 3,500 rpm. The engine is linked to a six-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

### CAPACITIES
There are seats for five people. Trunk capacity is generous at 20.1 cubic feet. The Taurus SHO can be equipped to tow a trailer weighing 1,000 pounds. The fuel tank holds 19 gallons of premium gasoline.

### SAFETY
Standard equipment includes front/rear solid disc brakes with antilock protection, electronic stability and traction control, electronic brake force distribution, side and head air bags.

### PRICE
The base price on the 2010 Taurus SHO is $37,770. Dealer's invoice price on base model is $34,583. Price as tested is $45,080, including $6,485 in options and a $825 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is $41,051. A $1,000 consumer's rebate was available as of Sunday. Prices are sourced from Ford, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

# New Ford Taurus symbolizes Ford's resurrection



The 2010 Ford Taurus SHO, a full-size all-wheel-drive, high-performance family sedan, is an excellent piece of automotive work, competitive on all levels with everything in its class, and sometimes better. AP

By WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

When you're lost, don't stay lost for long. Admit that you don't know where you're going, or what you're doing. Seek help, which is what Ford did in 2006 in choosing former Boeing executive Alan Mulally as its president and chief executive.

Mulally did not waste time or sentiment. He streamlined corporate management, and he overturned one of Ford management's worst decisions—the 2006 scrapping of the Taurus car brand.

Mulally brought back the Taurus name in the 2008 model year, arguing that the only thing wrong with the car was what had gone wrong with the company. Ford had forgotten that it was in the car business. Cars, as a result, went by the boards in favor of what Ford management construed as more lucrative trucks. The Taurus, originally introduced in 1986 to consumer and critical acclaim, did not fail. Instead, Mulally argued, Ford management had failed the Taurus.

He said the company and the Taurus brand needed the same thing—better cars, much better cars. And he delivered.

The proof is in a variety of new Ford automobiles: the Fusion Hybrid, the reworked Ford Focus, the Lincoln MKZ, the new Fiesta, and this column's subject car, the 2010 Taurus SHO (Super High Output).

When introduced in 1989, the Taurus SHO, equipped with a 3-liter, 220-horsepower Yamaha V-6 engine, quickly became a favorite among married men with children. It was a car suitable for a holiday trip to Grandma's house and a weekend on local racing circuits. That it was priced a tad below $20,000 was a bonus, affording high-performance driving on a shoestring budget.

The 2010 Taurus SHO follows much the same formula as the original—with 365 horsepower and 350 foot-pounds of torque in a twin-turbocharged V-6 engine—in a car that otherwise has all of the character and accommodations of a big family sedan.

But though it is measurably more affordable than its foreign high-performance rivals, the new Taurus SHO is by no means cheap. Pricing now starts at $37,770 on a car that requires premium unleaded fuel for "best performance."

The new Taurus SHO also differs from the old in that the new is full-size and leans more toward luxury, as opposed to the mid-size measurement and middling appointments of the old.

The changes can be disconcerting to people who grew up with up with the old Taurus. My assistant was taken aback by the size of the new Taurus and the complexity of its instrument panel, saying, "Too big with too many buttons."

But if you can get past those things, as I did the moment I keyed the ignition, you'll find lots to love. Fit, finish and overall comfort easily are among the best in business. Overall performance in acceleration and handling rivals that of more expensive cars—and that includes Audi, BMW and Lexus.

Delivering 17 miles per gallon in the city and 25 miles per gallon on the highway won't impress motorists who measure automotive value by how far they can drive on a gallon of fuel. But for those of us who remain easily seduced by horsepower and torque, it's a pretty neat trick, accomplished in this case by Ford's 3.5-liter "EcoBoost" V-6, which uses a combination of direct fuel injection and larger volumes of forced air to create maximum power without a commensurate increase in fuel consumption.

# High-tech vehicles pose trouble for some mechanics

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—A sign inside the Humming Motors auto repair shop says, "We do the worrying so you don't have to."

These days, owner David Baur spends a lot of time worrying in his full-service garage near downtown Los Angeles.

As cars become vastly more complicated than models made just a few years ago, Baur is often turning down jobs and referring customers to auto dealer shops. Like many other independent mechanics, he does not have the thousands of dollars to purchase the online manuals and specialized tools needed to fix the computer-controlled machines.

Baur says the dilemma has left customers with fewer options for repair work and given automakers an unfair advantage.

"When I was younger, I kept going until I solved the problem," the weary mechanic said as he wiped grease from his hands while taking a break. "Lately I find myself backing out. I'm more reluctant to take complex jobs on."

Access to repair information is at the heart of a debate over a congressional bill called the Right to Repair Act. Supporters of the proposal say automakers are trying to monopolize the parts and repair industry by only sharing crucial tools and data with their dealership shops. The bill, which has been sent to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, would require automakers to provide all information to diagnose and service vehicles.

Automakers say they spend millions in research and development and aren't willing to give away their intellectual property. They say the auto parts and repair industry wants the bill passed so it can get patented information to make its own parts and sell them for less.

AP

In this Sept. 3, 2009 photo, independent auto mechanic David Baur, owner of Humming Motors, poses for a photo at his shop in Los Angeles.

"Coke doesn't give away the recipe for Coke," said Charlie Territo, a spokesman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers. "What this bill seeks to get is the recipe for Coke."

Many new vehicles come equipped with multiple computers controlling everything from the brakes to steering wheel, and automakers hold the key to diagnosing a vehicle's problem. In many instances, replacing a part requires reprogramming the computers—a difficult task without the software codes or diagrams of the vehicle's electrical wires.

Mechanics say repair information gets constantly updated so they must know how to find answers amid the sometimes overwhelming amount of data. Keeping up with technology has become almost a part-time job and requires thousands of dollars to get the right tools and online manuals for each model.

"Doctors have it easy because the human body doesn't change model every year," said Paul Brow, owner of All-Car Specialists, a 30-year-old shop in suburban San Gabriel.

The technology wave has made even the simplest tasks difficult for some ill-equipped mechanics. Baur, for instance, said he couldn't turn off the "check tire pressure" light after fixing a 2008 Mercury Grand Marquis because he lacked the roughly $1,000 tool to reset the tire pressure monitor.

The customer said he has to visit the dealer shop to complete the job.

"The tires are fine, for some reason the light just stays on," Louis Ontiveros, 42, said. "I haven't had the time to deal with it."

Dealership shops may be reaping profits from the technological advancements. A study released in March by the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association found vehicle repairs cost an average of 34 percent more at new car dealerships than at independent repair shops, resulting in $11.7 billion in additional costs for consumers annually.

The association, whose members include Autozone, Jiffy Lube and other companies that provide replacement parts and accessories, contend automakers want the bill rejected so they can continue charging consumers more money.

"You pay all this money for your car, you should be able to decide where to get it repaired," said Aaron Lowe, the association's vice president of government affairs.

Opponents of the bill counter that the information and tools to repair the vehicles are available to those willing to buy them. They say any mechanic who can't get what they're looking for can file a complaint with the National Automotive Service Task Force. The nonprofit takes the complaints to carmakers and tries to resolve them through a voluntary arbitration process. Of the 44 complaints filed last year, all were resolved, according to the organization.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., has been stalled in the House committee since April but has attracted 51 co-sponsors. It's unclear when or if the committee will vote on the matter.

Not all independent mechanics want to see the proposal approved.

Donny Seyfer, owner of a repair shop in Wheat Ridge, Colo., said the bill gives the impression that mechanics are unable to fix cars unless Congress steps in.

"I am so upset they're out there telling my customers that I can't do my job," said Seyfer, who leads training classes for mechanics. He said the modern mechanic must take regular training classes and spend hours reading and networking with other mechanics to share the latest repair information.

# Life & Style

AP

In this Nov. 22, 2009 file photo, music artist Mary J. Blige arrives at the 37th Annual American Music Awards in Los Angeles.

## Q&A Mary J. Blige is 'Stronger' than ever

By MESFIN FEKADU
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Mary J. Blige, who is known as the "queen of hip-hop soul," says she's kept her lofty title because she stays in tune with what younger audiences want to hear.

"I always get inspired back from the Rihannas and the Beyonces," the 38-year-old says.

"You just have to be open enough to learn from another generation. ... That's being a smart person and that's why I'm always able to be just right there—not doing what they do, but what I do."

Blige's latest CD, "Stronger withEach Tear," has a fresh sound that maintains her R&B groove. It is her ninth studio release.

In a recent interview, Blige—who has won nine Grammy Awards since her debut in 1992—talked about R&B music, recording a jazz album—and being a crybaby.

**The Associated Press: Would you say that you're a sensitive person?**

**Blige:** I would say that I'm a very sensitive person.

**AP: Are you crying about the same things that you cried about earlier in your career?**

**Blige:** I think I cry about different things now. I cry because I want to be better than this. I want to continue to grow so, you know, I have to give myself a break. I'm my worst critic. I'm the hardest person on me. I've been like that forever, but I've just learned to give myself a break so even now when I slip ... I don't want to hurt anyone. And I cry when I hurt people unintentionally.

**AP: How do you react when one of your songs is played on the radio?**

**Blige:** If I hear one of my old songs like "Not Gon' Cry" or "My Life"—the "My Life" album just always makes me stop and just cry, like just bawl. So call me a crybaby, whatever. I'm a woman, too, so sometimes it's just that time.

**AP: Is it hard to perform those emotional songs when, at this point, you're in a different place?**

**Blige:** For me performing "Not Gon' Cry" and "I'm Goin' Down" and "My Life"—it's like therapy again. I just love the way it makes me feel at the moment and get it out of my system, you know. Those are hurtful places and sometimes you got to revisit for the sake of other people.

**AP: How would you compare today's R&B music with the '90s music?**

**Blige:** Can I say '80s, too? There is no comparison because the music in the '90s and the '80s was just like, music. You had Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis who were on the radio. Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones everywhere, all over the place.

*See MARY on Next Page*


*In Loving Memory of*

# Vicente Masga Sablan (BEN PACHO)

Born on July 21, 1948, was called by our Lord Jesus Christ to his eternal rest on Friday, December 25, 2009 at the age of 61

***He now joins his:***

**Parents** : Bonifacio Reyes Sablan & Maria Mendiola Masga Sablan
**Mother in Law** : Rufina Demapan Palacios
**Sister** : Felisa Sablan Pangelinan
**Daughter** : Vanessa Lynn Palacios Sablan
**Nephew** : John Boni Sablan Ogo
**In-Laws** : Margarita DLG San Nicholas, Faustina T. Sablan, Antonio A. Benavente, Adrian F. Murig & Gregorio V. Deleon Guerrero

***He will be extremely missed and forever remembered in the hearts of his:***

**Father In-Law** : Francisco Muna Palacios
**Wife** : Darlene Palacios Sablan
**Children** : **Vincent** & Norma *[Kimberly / Jackson (Keani & Kaedynce) Vincent / Michele (Vincent III & Matteo) Raymond, Kelly, Kelsey, Kathleen, Vanessa, Rufina]*
: **Frank** & Marylou *[Derry Jeremiah (Derry Jeremiah Jr.) John Jr.]*
: **Tricia** & Steven *[Chelsey/Yuichiro, Patrick, AmmaLynn, Jessica Jo (Nadine/Jason, Remy/Roger (Neveah Faith), Anthony, Natasha, Antonette)]*
: **Ryan** & Neftis *[Nefyan & Ryan Jr.]*
: **John Paul** & Juanette *[Phillip & Gwendolynn]*
: **Patrick** & Alma *[Bryce, Madison & Colin]*

**Brothers / Sisters & Family:**
Luis M./Winnie Sablan
Ramon M. Sablan
Jose M. Sablan
Jose Ch./Ofelia Pangelinan
Martin M. Sablan (Maxima Cruz) (Josepha)
Antonia S. Benavente
Julita M. Sablan & Elaine Camacho
Rosita S. /Ricardo Atalig
Emilia S. / Francisco Barcinas
Ramona S. /Isaac Calvo

**Brothers / Sisters-In-Laws & Family:**
Mary Ann P./James Reyes
Jacinta D. Palacios
Fatima P./Antonio Cabrera
Teresita P. Murig-Baring (Jerry)
Bernie D. Palacios
Francisco D. Palacios
Rita D. Palacios
Benjamin D./ Evelyn Palacios
Raymond D. Palacios
Frances D. Palacios (Nori Hernandez)
John Diego D. / Julita Palacios
Michael D./ Yumi Palacios
Pauline D. Palacios

**Caregiver:** Girlie Mole
**Confidant:** Congressman and Mrs. Oscar M. Babauta & Family

Daily memorial mass are being offered at Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 6:00 a.m. Nightly rosary is being said at 7:00 p.m. at Mt. Carmel Cathedral, except on Dec 31st, rosary will be said at 12:00 p.m. at his residence in Chalan Kanoa district 1. On January 4th, he will be leaving Cabrera Funeral Home at 7:00 a.m. and will be brought to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for viewing . Mass of Christian burial will be at 11:00 a.m., followed by interment services at the Chalan Kanoa cemetery.


## Robin Thicke is Dr. Love on new 'Sex Therapy' CD

By MESFIN FEKADU
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

AP

In this Dec. 15, 2009 file photo, recording artist Robin Thicke poses for a portrait in New York.

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Robin Thicke's new CD is called "Sex Therapy," but the sensual singer says guys have to think beyond the bedroom if they want to keep a woman happy.

Thicke's prescription for a satisfied woman includes the occasional foot rub, a dinner date, shopping sprees and listening sessions. But sex does play a part as well—hence the title of the album.

"Some women can buy their own shoes, some women don't want to go to lunch, some women like to cook, but they all need sex therapy," he said with a laugh in a recent interview. "It's the one thing every woman's going to need sooner or later. Except a nun. So this album is not for nuns."

The Grammy-winning songwriter talked about his loving his wife, actress Paula Patton, his upcoming film and getting raunchy on his fourth studio release, which features guests like Snoop Dogg and Jay-Z.

**The Associated Press: If you were a sex therapist and you had to give advice to a couple with intimacy issues—what would you say to them?**

**Thicke:** First thing, they probably just need to slow down and look at each other again and get in a new environment. Maybe go to a different restaurant, go anywhere else, have her try on some new lingerie, buy her some new lingerie, make her feel sexy. Maybe she needs to do something to make him feel sexy. But you can't ever give up on it because it's so easy to just start sitting there and the hours turn into days and the days turn into weeks and the next thing you know you ain't doing nothing with each other.

**AP: How did your family respond to the new music?**

**Thicke:** The CD is so wild and some people, they're a little offended even though they love certain songs. They're like, "Wow, you're getting so this and that." I'm like, "It's not that serious." ... My older brother, who always liked my music very much but never gone over the top, he just said, "I can't stop listening to it." He said, "This album is like great sex, I just want more and more and more of it." And I was like, "Wow, that's a pretty good advertisement." (Laughs) ... But then my mom (actress Gloria Loring) hears it and (is like), "Oh, it's a little aggressive for mommies."

**AP: Your wife is in the film "Precious." ... What was your first reaction after watching it?**

**Thicke:** I was the one who hooked it up. ... I had dinner with (director) Lee Daniels ... he gave me the script. My wife was doing a movie at the time, so I read the script. I cried reading the script. ... And she wasn't sure she wanted to do it. She didn't know how she'd make the teacher role original in the beginning, she was a little nervous about it, but I said, "Listen, I will pay this guy for you to be in this movie. This movie is going to make a difference." And I was lucky that I was right once (laughs). Because now she's very thankful that I told her you have to do this movie.

**AP: I hear will you be acting soon—tell me about that.**

**Thicke:** I wouldn't want to bring down other actors by

*See ROBIN on Next Page*

## MARY

*From Page 18*

Anita Baker, just so many amazing people. ... I'm not saying the music isn't beautiful now. It's just such a ... it's limited.

**AP: How do you think your fashion style has evolved?**

**Blige:** I mean I've had some disasters, some trials, some errors, some disastrous hair moments and clothing moments, but that's due to the insecurity in me and not knowing what works for me and trying to do what works for everybody else. But once you fall into what works for you, which is what I did, you can't go wrong unless you just want to go wrong.

**AP: What advice do you have for insecure women who dress in a way they probably shouldn't dress?**

**Blige:** I guess the insecure younger woman, just do what works for you because everything doesn't work for everyone. You know exactly what works for you. You know if you can wear something tight and formfitting and it be hot, or you know if you're going to wear something tight and you're going to be bubbling all over the place. So I mean, use your common sense and be confident in that.

**AP: You've collaborated with everyone from Sting to U2 to Aretha Franklin. Is there anyone else you'd like to work with?**

**Blige:** I haven't had a chance to collaborate with Anita Baker yet. So when I do my jazz album, Anita, I'm coming for you.

**AP: When are you planning to release the jazz CD?**

**Blige:** I have no idea when I'm going to do the jazz album, but it can't be long. It won't be long.

## ROBIN

*From Page 18*

saying what I'm trying to do is acting. (Laughs) What they do is acting, I'm just trying. But I got a role in this animated film ("Rio") with Anne Hathaway and a few other very talented people, where I play a bird, a singing bird.

**AP: What advice did Paula give you?**

**Thicke:** My wife's like, "You have to get into the part, you have to listen to salsa music, you have to do this, and look at birds on the Internet and the Brazilian rain forest." See my wife, she studies. She goes all the way.

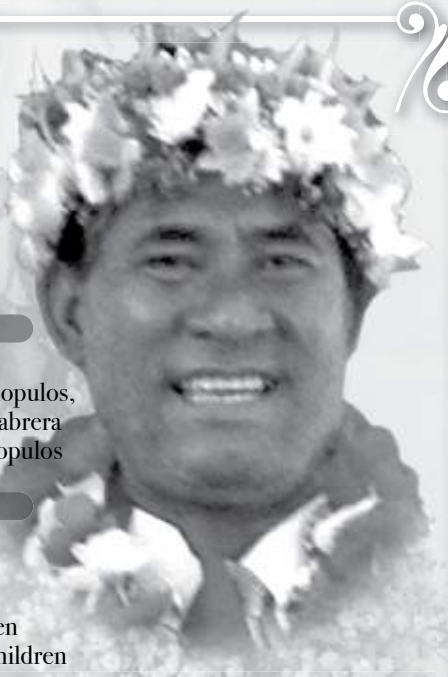
**AP: I know your wife is pregnant—how does it feel to know you will be a father soon?**

**Thicke:** It's extremely exciting. All day long when I get a little worried or scared or anxious or tired, I just say, "Thank you God for, as of right now, a healthy child and a healthy wife and a happy home." In this world that should be enough to make a man happy for a day, you know what I mean? Every time I get a little frustrated I just thank God for those things.


# Death Announcement

In Loving Memory of Retired PSS Teacher and

## Pastor Osaky Keller



April 23, 1960 – December 23, 2009, of Pohnpei,
and present resident of Dandan, Saipan, was called to rest at the
Commonwealth Health Center by our Heavenly Father at the age of 49.

**Pre-Deceased:**

*Father:* Makes Keller,
*Mother:* Kinie Keller
*Sister:* Kimiko Keller Jerry
*Father-in-Law:* Estanislao Gays Scaliem

*Brothers-in-Law:* Shaid Jerry, Deniel Handy, Ansber Diopulos, Joseph Joseph, Jose M. Cabrera
*Nephews:* Endris Handy, Gerald Diopulos

**Lovingly survived by his:**

*Wife:* Mildred Scaliem Keller
*Children , Spouses and Grandchildren:*
Osaky Keller Junior
Gayson, wife Nancy and daughters: Miltrisia, Kaylani, and son Gaynan
Melvin Keller
Joshua Keller
McMillen Keller

*Siblings:*
Mrs. Eriko Handy and children
Makir/Elizabeth Keller and children
Nihlis/Jenny Keller Ernest and children
Mathias/Sihna Keller Lawrence and children
Mrs. Erina Keller Diopulos and children
Kosaky /Pelmihna Keller and children
Keisilihna Keller Joseph and children
Kosak/Anako Keller and children
Sakies Keller and children
Mrs. Kiniorihda/Nahsar Keller Yens and children
Kelly/Aneleen Keller and children
Yokorihda Keller and children

*Mother-in-Law:* Mariana E. Scaliem
*Brothers –and-Sisters-in-Law:* Nora E. Scaliem/daughter; Flora e. Scaliem/children; Margaret S.Cabrera/children; Steven E. Scaliem/daughter; Fernando E. & Maylyn Scaliem/children; Maria Ines O. &Stanley Sepin/children; Rosaly F. & Johnny Isaac/children; Christina S. Elnei/son; Leon E. & Leilyn Scaliem/children; Lida E. Scaliem; MacGarry E. Scaliem & Jane Isaac/children; Stanley E. & Linda Scaliem/children;.

Nightly prayer services are held at the family residence in Lower Dandan, at 7:30 p.m. Final funeral date and services will be announced later upon the arrival of family and children from Pohnpei and the mainland USA.

Your thoughs and prayers are deeply appreciated.

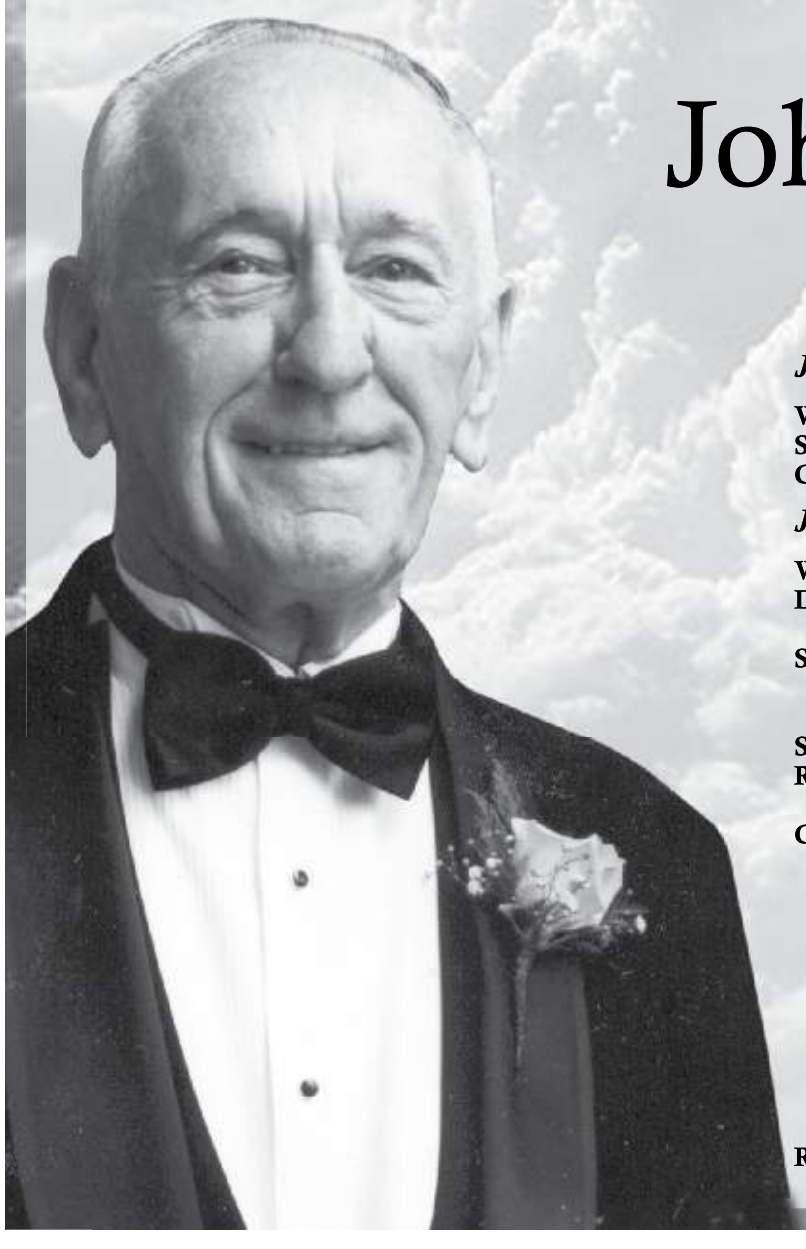
**Mildred S. Keller, Children and families.**



DEATH AND FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

*In loving memory of*

# John Raymond Wilson, Sr.



Also known as "Pop-Pop"

Was born on January 23, 1921 in Ashland, Pennsylvania, was called to eternal rest by our Heavenly Father on December 26, 2009 at the age of 88.

***John is Pre-deceased by:***

**Wife:** Helen G. Wilson
**Sons:** John R. Wilson, Jr., Gregory Anthony Wilson
**Granddaughter:** Janine Erica Wilson Lizama

***John is survived by:***

**Wife:** Shirley A. Wilson
**Daughters:** Elizabeth (Betsy) & Cesar Pastor
Suzanne (Sooze) & Vicente Lizama
**Sons:** Anthony Joseph (Tony Joe) Wilson
James Joseph (Jim) Wilson
Loran & Susan Wilson
**Stepson:** Renante A. Tadtad
**Reared Children:** Keli Aiken Tenorio
Kippy Aiken
**Grandchildren:** Robin & Augustin Palacios
Theresa & Booker Taylor
Tony Wilson
Katherine Ann Lizama & Phillip Eusebio
Leeanna & Larry Provost
Andrew Wilson
Dominic Pastor
Cesar Jr. Pastor
Aaron Wilson
Paula Helene Pastor
Lindsey Wilson
**Reared Grandson:** Raymond Santos

**Great Grandchildren:**
Tyler Augustin Palacios
Damian Augustin Palacios
Sky Gusteen Palacios
Kane Phillip Eusebio
Ponce Phillip Eusebio
Camille Booker
Ryker Wilson

**Care Takers:** Cora, Edwin, Cecilia, Ramon, Linda, Ren Ren

***John is survived by numerous relatives in Pennsylvania.***

**On Wednesday, December 30, 2009 our beloved John (Pop-Pop) will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home at 9:00am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am. Followed by interment services.**

**Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.**

**The Family**

# Merry Xmas in Hollywood: Box-office record falls

**NEW YORK** (AP)—It was a memorable and merry Christmas in Hollywood as moviegoers shattered box-office records, responding in droves to a diverse array of high-profile releases over the holiday weekend.

The estimated $278 million in weekend box-office revenue broke the previous record of roughly $253 million set in July 2008, the weekend "The Dark Knight" was released.

"Avatar," the 3-D epic, topped them all, earning $75 million for 20th Century Fox, according to studio estimates Sunday. Remarkably, that was only a 3 percent drop from its opening weekend total of $77.4 million. (Blockbusters typically drop 30-50 percent in the second weekend.) In its 10 days of release, "Avatar" has made $212 million domestically—and could be on its way to a worldwide gross of over $1 billion.

AP

In this film publicity image released by 20th Century Fox, the character Neytiri, voiced by Zoe Saldana, and the character Jake, voiced by Sam Worthington are shown in a scene from, "Avatar."

"This thing is going to be playing and playing, I can tell you that," said Bert Livingston, 20th Century Fox distribution executive. "There's a lot of business out there. Everybody's got good movies out."

In second was "Sherlock Holmes," Guy Ritchie's reboot of the franchise with Robert Downey Jr. starring as Arthur Conan Doyle's detective. The Warner Bros. film opened with a weekend total of $65.4 million, including a record Christmas Day debut of $24.9 million.

"Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel," which opened Wednesday, took in $50.2 million on the weekend and $77.1 million in its five days of release. The film, also from Fox, earned an impressive $18.8 million on Wednesday alone. The strong start suggested that "Squeakquel" was likely to surpass its 2007 original, which made $217 million.

Also opening was Nancy Meyer's "It's Complicated," the romantic comedy starring Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin. With an audience 72 percent female, the Universal film took in $22.1 million, a solid debut.

The sparkling Christmas weekend results spelled good things for all the films in release in the coming week—one of the most lucrative of the year.

Two films with Oscar aspirations released wide over the weekend: Jason Reitman's "Up in the Air" (Paramount) and Rob Marshall's "Nine" (Weinstein Co.).

"Up in the Air," which has some of the best awards momentum, grossed $11.8 million, bringing its cumulative total to $24.5 million—already nearly earning back its production budget.

"Nine," the adaptation of the Broadway musical (which itself was a riff of Federico Fellini's classic film "8 1/2") earned $5.5 million in 1408 theaters.

2009 still has several days to go, but the year is already a record for domestic ticket sales with more than $10 billion at the box office. That surpassed the $9.7 billion mark of 2007.

1. ***"Avatar,"*** $75 million.
2. ***"Sherlock Holmes,"*** $65.4 million.
3. ***"Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel,"*** $50.2 million.
4. ***"It's Complicated,"*** $22.1 million.
5. ***"Up in the Air,"*** $11.8 million.
6. ***"The Blind Side,"*** $11.7 million.
7. ***"The Princess and the Frog,"*** $8.7 million.
8. ***"Nine,"*** $5.5 million.
9. ***"Did You Hear About the Morgans?"*** $5 million.
10. ***"Invictus,"*** $4.4 million.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Sherlock Holmes
Friday & Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:05 9:55
Sun through Thurs 1:05 4:05 7:05
Robert Downey, Jr., Jude Law
Action, Mystery • Rated PG 13

Synopsis
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous super-sleuth, Sherlock Holmes, gets an update with this adaptation of Lionel Wigram's comic book series by writer/director Guy Ritchie (RocknRolla) starring Robert Downey Jr. as the titular detective, with Jude Law stepping into the shoes of his sidekick, Dr. Watson. Heading up the rest of the cast are RocknRolla's Mark Strong as the film's villain, Blackwood, and Rachel McAdams portraying the love interest, Irene Adler.

It's Complicated
Friday & Saturday 1:30 4:20 7:10 9:40
Sun through Thurs 1:30 4:20 7:10
Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin
Comedy • Rated R

Synopsis
Veteran writer/director Nancy Meyers (Something's Gotta Give, What Women Want) returns to familiar romantic comedy territory with this untitled production for Universal Pictures starring Meryl Streep as a woman who finds herself caught in the middle of dual romantic advances from two suitors (played by Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin).

Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Sqeakquel
Friday & Saturday 1:15 4:15 7:25 9:30
Sun through Thurs 1:15 4:15 7:25
Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler
Children, Family • Rated PG

Synopsis
The lovable singing-and-dancing trio of famous marmots continues their big-screen hijinks with this follow-up to the 20th Century Fox smash-hit live-action/CG family comedy, this time incorporating a female version of the group entitled the Chipettes. Dr. Dolittle's Betty Thomas helms with Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler, and Jesse McCartney returning as the voices of Alvin, Simon, and Theodore.

★ ★ ★

Avatar
Friday & Saturday 12:15 3:30 6:45 10:00
Sun through Thurs 12:15 3:30 6:45
Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Did You Hear About The Morgans?
Friday & Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:30 9:50
Sun through Thurs 1:20 4:10 7:30
Hugh Grant, Sarah Jessica Parker
Comedy • Rated PG 13

The Princess And The Frog
Friday & Saturday 1:10 4:30 7:20 9:35
Sun through Thurs 1:10 4:30 7:20
Anika Noni Rose, John Goodman
Comedy, Family • Rated G

Twilight Saga: New Moon
Friday & Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sun through Thurs 1:00 4:00 7:00
Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart
Thriller, Romance • Rated PG 13

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MOVIE REVIEW

# *'Imaginarium'* takes a mirror trip

By KENNETH TURAN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

**HOLLYWOOD**—"The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus" is as unusual and idiosyncratic as its one-of-a-kind title.

You'd expect no less from director Terry Gilliam, and admirers of this singular filmmaker will be pleased to know that "Imaginarium" is one of his most original and accessible works.

A member of the Monty Python troupe, Gilliam is nothing if not audacious; witness earlier films such as "Brazil," "Time Bandits" and "Twelve Monkeys." Here he applies his fantastic imagination to a visually dazzling tale of combat for human souls.

"This is my 'Fanny and Alexander,' my 'Amarcord,' " Gilliam said when the film premiered at Cannes. "I went back to the things I'm really good at."

Though "Imaginarium's" head-spinning plot, part metaphysical allegory, part knockabout farce, resists easy summation, the film, co-written by Charles McKeown, has a back story no one is likely to forget. When actor Heath Ledger died, this was the project he left half-finished. And it would have stayed that way if colleagues Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell had not pitched in to finish it so seamlessly that Gilliam says one of the postproduction people assumed it had been written this way.

Ledger was attracted to the role of Tony—a hustler of uncertain morality—by an unplanned glimpse of the storyboards Gilliam and his team dreamed up. From the film's opening images of a ramshackle horse-drawn show wagon as old as time moving slowly through modern London, the script lives up to the dialogue line that serves as its motto: "This world we live in is full of enchantment for those with the eyes to see it."

That wagon is the domain of Dr. Parnassus (Christopher Plummer), an ancient, far-seeing shaman who runs this traveling show with the help of young assistant Anton (Andrew Garfield), a sarcastic dwarf named Percy (Verne Troyer) and the doctor's beautiful daughter, Valentina (Lily Cole).

The heart of the doctor's show is a magic mirror that allows those who go through it to experience another dimension of their own minds. Once inside, people choose for good or evil, opting for—to give one example—either the difficult but rewarding heights of Mount Parnassus or the easy pleasures of Mr. Nick's Lounge Bar.

As the doctor angrily puts it when asked what he's playing: "We don't play; what we do is deadly serious," which means nothing less than the eternal battle with the devil for the spirit of a human.

This being a Gilliam film, the devil is no theological concept; he is the very real Mr. Nick, played with fiendish panache by Tom Waits ("He was born for the part," Gilliam says) and looking, in his bow tie, bowler hat and pencil-thin mustache, very much like a gambler in a cheap suit.

In fact, Mr. Nick loves a bet more than anything, and the past 1,000 years or so have been a series of wagers with the ever-gullible Doctor P.

The result of one particularly painful loss has meant that the doctor has to give up his beloved Valentina on her 16th birthday, which is only a few days away.

At the last minute, the action-seeking Mr. Nick proposes yet another bet: First person to win five souls gets to keep Valentina. The appearance of Ledger's Tony and his gift of gab give Parnassus new hope, but Mr. Nick, who is the devil after all, has no end of tricks up his sleeve.

When Ledger died, Gilliam's first thought was to abandon the film, but he was prevailed upon by his team to continue. As it turned out, what was left to shoot was a series of sequences of Tony behind the mirror, so once Gilliam tinkered with the script to make it clear that people physically change when they go through the glass, everything fell beautifully into place.

As he did in "The Dark Knight," Ledger displays a real zest for his morally challenged character, but the most entertaining acting is the back and forth between Waits and Plummer as the personifications of a personal battle between good and evil that has been going on forever.

The real star of any Terry Gilliam film, of course, is the director and his unparalleled imagination. Nothing is neat and tidy in "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus," and the film itself advises, "Don't worry if you don't understand it all immediately."

But if you are looking for pure mad fantasy, for someone to take you through the doors of perception themselves, this is the place to go.

# Jon Gosselin's NYC apartment trashed over holidays

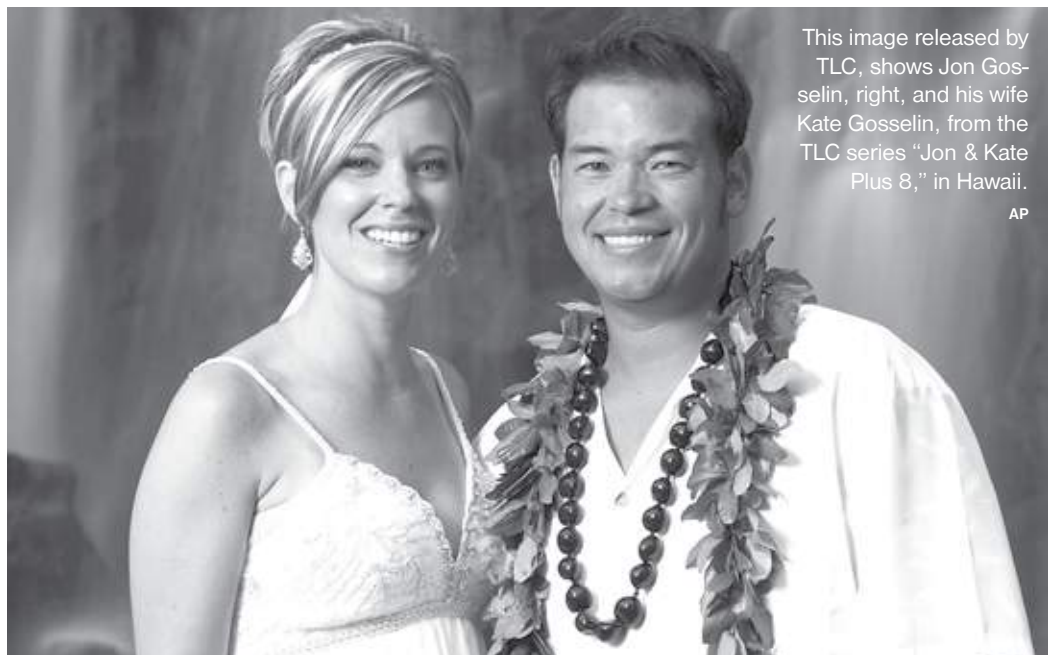
**NEW YORK** (AP)—Jon Gosselin's apartment was ransacked by someone who slashed furniture, stole his TV and left a note pinned to his dresser with a butcher knife while he visited his children for Christmas, his lawyer said Sunday.

The reality show star was "devastated" by the destruction he found when he returned Saturday from Pennsylvania, attorney Mark Jay Heller said in a statement.

Gosselin's clothes, bed and other furniture were cut up, and a family-heirloom vase was shattered, Heller said. His TV, other electronics and his dishes were taken by a "very troubled and sick perpetrator," Heller said.

He wouldn't disclose who signed the note or what it said, adding that police were examining it. Police declined to comment.

The burglary marks the latest real-life drama for the 32-year-old Gosselin, who was half of the couple who rose to fame as the prolific parents of TLC's "Jon & Kate Plus 8" before splitting up this year.



This image released by TLC, shows Jon Gosselin, right, and his wife Kate Gosselin, from the TLC series "Jon & Kate Plus 8," in Hawaii.

AP

Viewers watched their 10-year marriage disintegrate amid allegations that both had been unfaithful, which they denied. The breakup itself became an entertainment event, announced in an episode watched by more than 10 million people.

They initially planned to go on with the show, but it foundered on scandals, bickering and legal disputes. The last episode aired Nov. 23.

The couple officially divorced Dec. 18, with 34-year-old Kate Gosselin keeping the family home in eastern Pennsylvania and continuing as the primary caretaker of their 9-year-old twins and 5-year-old sextuplets.

AP

In this Sept. 13, 2009 photo, Tyler Perry participates in a news conference for the film 'Precious' at the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto. Perry says he is taking his sharp-tongued character "Madea" back on tour.

## Tyler Perry to take 'Madea' play on the road in 2010

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Movie producer and actor Tyler Perry says he is taking his sharp-tongued character "Madea" back on tour.

Perry posted a message on his Web site Saturday that said he had taken some time off in the past few months "so I could spend my mother's final days at her side." His mother, Willie Maxine Perry, died Dec. 8 at age 64.

Perry says he will begin touring with his new play, "Madea's Big Happy Family," the iron-willed Southern matriarch he portrays in a wig and padded suit. She is the central character of many of his films, including "Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail."

The actor says he is eager to have Madea on stage for the first time in five years. The first leg of the tour begins Jan. 4 in El Paso, Texas, then goes on to Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle and Portland, Ore.

## Charlie Sheen accused of using weapon

**ASPEN, Colo.** (AP)—Authorities say actor Charlie Sheen has been accused of using a weapon in an alleged case of domestic violence in Aspen.

Sheen spent part of Christmas Day in jail after being arrested at a home in the Colorado ski resort town.

Police spokeswoman Stephanie Dasaro did not provide details on what kind of weapon Sheen is accused of using.

Sheen also was arrested on investigation of second-degree assault, a felony, and criminal mischief, a misdemeanor.

This Jan. 28, 2009 file photo shows Charlie Sheen in Los Angeles. Sheen was arrested in Aspen, Colo.

AP

Sheen's lawyer didn't return a telephone call Sunday seeking comment.

Sheen hasn't been charged and was released Friday after posting an $8,500 bond. Prosecutors will determine whether to file charges.

## Russian author Grigory Baklanov dies at 86

**MOSCOW** (AP)—Russian author and editor Grigory Baklanov has died at the age of 86.

The Moscow Writers Union says Baklanov died in Moscow on Wednesday, but didn't specify the cause of his death.

Baklanov wrote fiction books which tapped into his World War II experience. Baklanov was recruited into the Red Army months after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union.

He went to the frontline as an 18-year old private and witnessed the bitter Soviet defeats early in the war, then rose through the ranks to become an artillery officer. Baklanov was badly wounded in combat and received several medals for valor.

Baklanov's works such as "An Inch of Land," "Forever Nineteen," "July 1941" and "The Dead Shouldn't Be Shamed" have been widely published in the former Soviet Union and abroad. Baklanov won the prestigious State Prize of the Soviet Union.

During Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, Baklanov played a prominent role as the editor of Znamya, a leading literary monthly. Along with other publications, Znamya spearheaded Gorbachev's glasnost drive, publishing works previously banned by Communist censors and exposing the crimes of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and his henchmen.

## ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

### Michael Moore, Jeff Garlin announce comedy fest

**TRAVERSE CITY, Michigan** (AP)—Filmmaker Michael Moore started a summer film festival five years ago in his adopted hometown of Traverse City, Michigan. Now he's teaming with Emmy winner Jeff Garlin to organize a mid-winter comedy counterpart. The inaugural Traverse City Comedy Arts Festival will be held Feb. 19-21. It will feature star performers, along with talented up-and-comers. The lineup will be revealed next month. Moore is a Flint native who now lives in Traverse City. The Lake Michigan resort community is about 250 miles (400 kilometers) northwest of Detroit. He and Garlin say they want to boost a state where the economy was sinking long before the nationwide downturn. In addition to stand-up performances by established artists, there will be acts featuring improvisational groups and premieres of comedy movies—plus a show for children.

### Documentary on Jackson doctor planned

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—When Michael Jackson's embattled personal physician returned to work last month, cameras were rolling. Miranda Sevcik, a spokeswoman for Dr. Conrad Murray, confirms that a British documentary crew chronicled his first day back at a Houston clinic for the poor. Murray returned to the clinic Nov. 23 and was greeted by several patients and his pastor. Murray remains under investigation for his role in Jackson's June 25 death. No charges have been filed, but investigators are looking into whether Murray improperly administered the pop superstar the powerful anesthetic propofol. Sevcik says Murray agreed to be filmed, but only if the footage didn't air until after all legal proceedings are complete. Details of the project were first reported by celebrity Web site TMZ.

## 'Multitasking' drivers should have only one job in mind

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

**DEAR ABBY**: I applaud "Terrified Mama in California" (Oct. 30) on her stance with her "multitasking" daughter who texts and phones while driving. I recently swore off cell phone use in my vehicle after I saw the dramatic BBC public service ad on YouTube discouraging it, a re-enactment of an actual event. I am forever changed for the better, and so are my two daughters who ride with me.

If there is an emergency, my family now knows that if I don't answer my phone, they should call right back and I'll pull over to take the call. Otherwise, I will call later. This has worked like a charm.

I still notice all the other phone conversations going on while people operate thousands of pounds of steel, glass and plastic containing their most precious cargo. What are they talking about? I'll bet it could wait. Driving time for me is now spent conversing with my kids, singing along to music or just chilling out.

As moms, we are concerned about lead in our children's toys, the safety of flu vaccines and additives in the foods they eat. But it never occurs to us that, in the blink of an eye, life can change forever because of that call or text that "had" to be made.

You CANNOT do it all. Be present in the moment when you operate your vehicle. The life you save may be your own.

SUSAN IN PENNSYLVANIA

**DEAR SUSAN: Thank you for your persuasive reminder. Many readers were eager to share their views on this topic, which is so often in the news today. Read on:**

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY**: If "Terrified's" daughter were only a danger to herself, I'd be all in favor of allowing her to compete for a Darwin award. Unfortunately, she's a danger to everyone.

I have seen amazingly mindless behavior by people on cell phones who were not driving—including one who paid for and walked away from her purchases at a store. Too many cell phone users are completely oblivious to anything but their conversation. It should be obvious that phones and driving don't go together.

Earlier this year a woman on a cell phone here hit a motorcyclist. Apparently clueless to having just been in an accident, she proceeded to drive over him, and that's what killed him. Witnesses said she was still talking on her phone when she got out of her SUV.

Abby, you missed a golden opportunity to call for state or federal regulations banning the use of cell phones while driving. It would make the world safer for everyone.

LARRY IN KANSAS CITY

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY**: I was shocked that you told that mother that there isn't much she can do if her daughter doesn't want to shape up. You said yourself the practice could be compared to driving drunk. She is endangering her child every time she's behind the wheel "multitasking." That grandmother should not give up trying to save her grandchild.

I work for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. President Obama has asked all government employees to pledge to not drive while operating tech devices. Grandma should report her daughter to the authorities for child endangerment.

N.H.T.S.A. MOM

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY**: I was slightly distracted by a phone call while driving home one afternoon. A car crossed the double yellow line and cut me off. I saw it, swerved and lost control of my vehicle, which crashed into the divider and flipped over, shattering my legs in the process. Thank goodness my son was not in the car with me.

I'm convinced the phone I was holding in my hand kept me from being able to completely control my car. Since that day, I never phone or text while driving.

LISA IN LONG BEACH

■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** To "Terrified Mama": Call the police and give them your daughter's license plate number. Tell them she's driving while on the phone or texting (both illegal in your state), and you're afraid she or your grandkids will be hurt. They will watch for her and pull her over. Perhaps a traffic ticket will do what your concern has not.

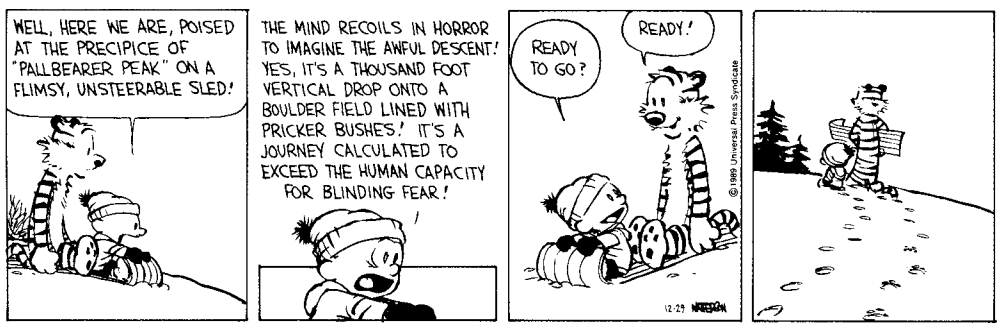
BARBARA IN DALLAS

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

# Pastimes

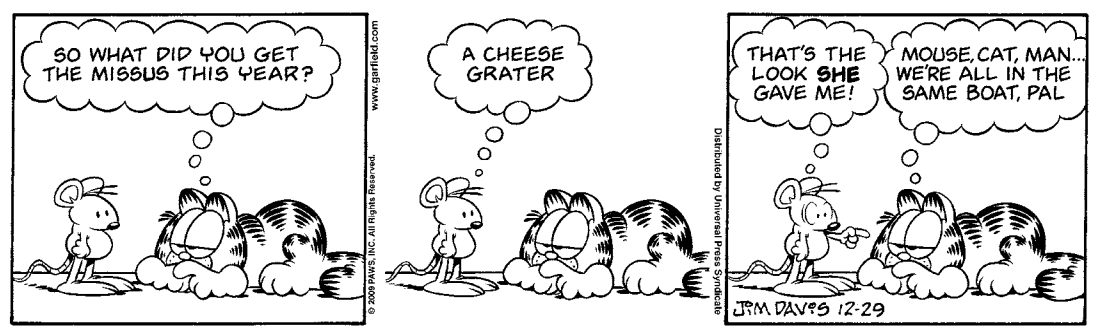
## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WELL, HERE WE ARE, POISED AT THE PRECIPICE OF "PALLBEARER PEAK" ON A FLIMSY, UNSTEERABLE SLED!
THE MIND RECOILS IN HORROR TO IMAGINE THE AWFUL DESCENT! YES, IT'S A THOUSAND FOOT VERTICAL DROP ONTO A BOULDER FIELD LINED WITH PRICKER BUSHES! IT'S A JOURNEY CALCULATED TO EXCEED THE HUMAN CAPACITY FOR BLINDING FEAR!
READY TO GO?
READY!
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
12-29

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis


SO WHAT DID YOU GET THE MISSUS THIS YEAR?
A CHEESE GRATER
THAT'S THE LOOK SHE GAVE ME!
MOUSE, CAT, MAN... WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT, PAL
www.garfield.com
© 2009 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 12-29

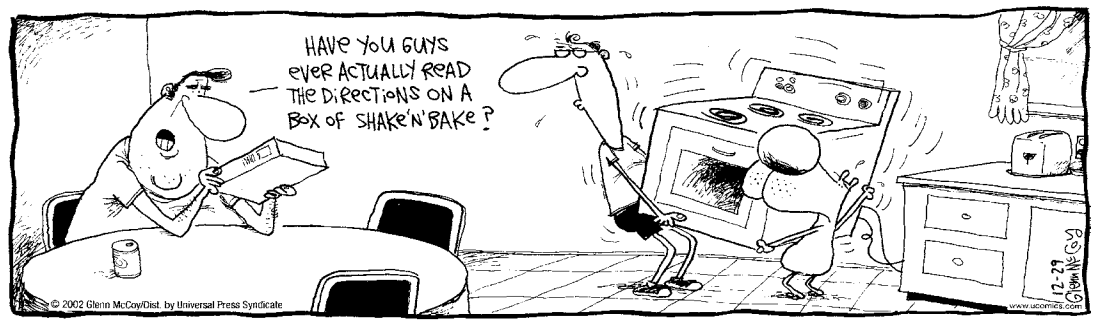
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

I'M FEELING PRETTY GOOD ABOUT THE NUMBER OF THINGS I CHECKED OFF MY RESOLUTION LIST FOR 2009.
COMB HAIR
WEAR SOCKS
BRUSH TEET
© 2009 Universal Uclick
ADAM, THOSE ARE THE SIMPLEST RESOLUTIONS I'VE EVER SEEN.
I KNOW! I SET THE BAR LOW...
...BECAUSE MY #1 RESOLUTION WAS TO BUILD MY SELF-ESTEEM!
www.gocomics.com

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


HAVE YOU GUYS EVER ACTUALLY READ THE DIRECTIONS ON A BOX OF SHAKE'N'BAKE?
© 2002 Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
12-29
www.ucomics.com

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

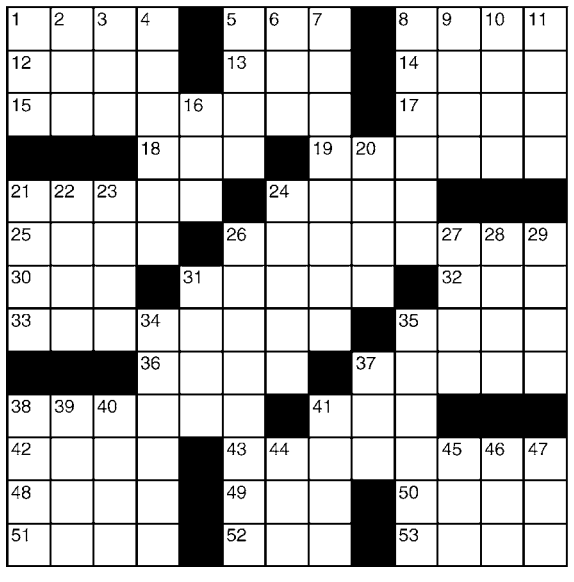
**ACROSS**
1 Sleeve end
5 Barracks bed
8 Snare
12 Largest continent
13 Bonfire residue
14 Mysterious character
15 Buttercup cousin
17 "Do — others ..."
18 Nosh
19 Source
21 In two places
24 "— the night before ..."
25 Imitate
26 Place saver of a sort
30 — -de-France
31 Fight verbally
32 Card player's call
33 Turkey preference for some
35 Somewhat, in music
36 Meadows
37 Be obliged (to)
38 Total
41 Ailing
42 Small pie
43 London area where you'll find Speakers' Corner
48 Bailiff's call
49 Conger, for one
50 Notion
51 Flower
52 Beam of light
53 Decorative beer mug

**DOWN**
1 Ore. neighbor
2 NAFTA signatory
3 Christmas tree, often
4 Charlatanism
5 Team leader (Abbr.)
6 Buckeyes' sch.
7 Ditch
8 Self-evident statement
9 Ladder component
10 Con
11 Drudge
16 Took a load off
20 Croupier's tool
21 Alkali neutralizer
22 Silents star Negri
23 Mimic
24 Frat party garb
26 Respite
27 Enthusiastic
28 Opulent
29 Entanglement
31 Prayer ending
34 Inept
35 Preacher's place
37 Bullring bravo
38 On
39 BLT topper
40 Raw minerals
41 Without acting
44 Verily
45 Commotion
46 CSA soldier
47 A Round Table knight

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | P | ■ | M | A | F | I | A | ■ | G | P | A |
| A | L | E | ■ | A | D | D | O | N | ■ | L | O | G |
| C | L | A | S | S | M | A | T | E | ■ | A | R | E |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | H | I | ■ | A | M | U | S | E | D |
| B | A | G | G | E | R | ■ | S | I | T | S | ■ | ■ |
| O | U | R | ■ | D | A | Y | ■ | C | A | W | E | D |
| D | R | A | B | ■ | L | A | D | ■ | H | O | P | I |
| E | A | S | E | D | ■ | P | E | P | ■ | O | E | R |
| ■ | ■ | S | L | O | B | ■ | B | A | L | L | E | T |
| V | I | R | T | U | E | ■ | U | S | O | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| A | D | O | ■ | B | R | A | S | S | B | A | N | D |
| L | E | O | ■ | T | E | N | S | E | ■ | B | I | O |
| E | A | T | ■ | S | T | A | Y | S | ■ | A | P | E |

Yesterday's answer 12-29



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY**: Jude Law, 37; Bryan "Dexter" Holland, 44; Ted Danson, 62; Marianne Faithfull, 63

**Happy Birthday**: The option to make money or to follow a creative dream may confuse you. Don't limit the possibilities by failing to follow through. Action will prove what you are capable of doing. It's a fine line you are walking and it's extremely important you oversee every step with an open mind. Your numbers are 7, 13, 20, 25, 27, 31, 44

**ARIES** (*March 21-April 19*): Stop bickering. Take time to think about your future plans and to consider how they will affect all the people you love and who love you. Don't leave problems unsolved. ✪✪✪✪

**TAURUS** (*April 20-May 20*): Do not overreact to things that you can do nothing about or about which you don't have all the information. Focus on fun, travel and getting together with friends. Close the year with a joyful gesture and determined attitude. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** (*May 21-June 20*): You must ignore any legal, financial or contractual problems for the moment. The only thing that will help you right now is to distance yourself from the mayhem and focus on bringing in the year on a happy note. Avoid pressure and arguments. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** (*June 21-July 22*): Think before you act or prepare to face a head-on battle with someone looking for trouble. Minor accidents or mishaps will occur if you are careless or preoccupied. Avoid responsibilities that don't belong to you. ✪✪✪

**LEO** (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Make plans to entertain or do something special for the people you care about the most. Your high energy will help to lift the spirits of someone who has been through a difficult time. Expect your expenses to be more than anticipated but worth every penny. ✪✪✪✪

**VIRGO** (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You don't have to take on responsibilities that aren't meant to be yours alone. If you work as a team player, you will gain respect and end up with the best of everything. ✪✪

**LIBRA** (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): It's the time spent with family and friends that will help you revisit an old idea that can fit quite nicely into your plans for the new year. Have patience with someone older—there is something to be learned from the experience being offered. ✪✪✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): A special offer is heading your way. Share your thoughts with friends and you will get the inside scoop you need to take a different path. A move or change at home will give you greater security and the opportunity to do something you've been wanting to do. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): It's time to make a choice instead of avoiding the inevitable. By being noncommittal, you are painting yourself as someone afraid to make a move. Surprise everyone by stepping up, voicing your opinion and being honest. ✪✪✪

**CAPRICORN** (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't hold back if you have an attentive audience and the chance to drum up support for something you want to pursue in the new year. Your originality coupled with a little pressure will be tempting. ✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**AQUARIUS** (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): You will enjoy getting together with friends who appreciate your wisdom and knowledge. Don't be surprised if a friendship you've been enjoying turns into a partnership of some sort. Time spent discussing future plans will be entertaining. ✪✪✪✪✪

**PISCES** (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll be tempted to make impulsive moves. You mustn't be fooled by anyone offering something that is too good to be true. You will be vulnerable and easily taken for granted. Say no if you are unsure. ✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are persistent and strive to do and be your best. You are adaptable and always open to suggestions. You are a good friend and companion.

*Eugenia's Web sites:* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | | | | | | | | 6 |
| | 5 | | 2 | 8 | | 3 | 9 | |
| | 7 | 1 | | | | 8 | | |
| | | | 8 | | 2 | | 1 | |
| | 6 | | | | | | 5 | |
| | 2 | | 3 | | 9 | | | |
| | | 8 | | | | 4 | 7 | |
| | 4 | 2 | | 7 | 5 | | 3 | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | 2 |

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 1 |
| 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| 2 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 9 |

Difficulty Level ★ 12/28

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## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

**BIOMETRICS** **Solution: 10 letters**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | T | U | S | Y | H | A | M | A | T | C | H | D | P | P |
| L | A | R | T | I | N | A | C | O | M | P | U | T | E | R |
| A | N | I | A | A | R | E | B | I | T | A | P | R | R | I |
| C | L | A | T | I | G | I | D | I | R | I | M | R | F | V |
| I | P | O | I | N | T | G | T | F | T | A | O | I | O | A |
| S | M | A | S | M | E | S | R | C | N | S | N | N | R | C |
| Y | S | P | T | E | E | M | H | E | N | G | T | O | M | Y |
| H | E | P | I | T | Q | U | N | E | E | R | M | S | A | T |
| P | R | R | C | S | E | C | S | R | E | K | L | R | N | I |
| S | U | O | A | Y | E | R | P | V | E | E | A | E | C | R |
| B | T | V | L | S | A | R | N | E | R | V | P | P | E | U |
| O | A | E | E | E | I | O | N | I | O | O | O | A | E | C |
| D | E | D | S | N | C | H | A | N | D | I | S | G | H | E |
| Y | F | I | T | N | E | D | I | S | O | Ⓒ | Ⓞ | Ⓟ | Ⓨ | S |
| S | P | A | S | S | P | O | R | T | C | E | L | L | O | C |

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Anatomy, Approved, Body, Collect, Computer, Convert, Copy, Deny, Digital, Ears, Features, Fingerprint, Fraud, Gait, Government, Greek, Habit, Hand, Identify, Iris, Match, Motion, Odor, Palm, Passport, Pattern, Performance, Permanence, Person, Physical, Pitch, Privacy, Security, Sensor, Sets, Shape, Statistical, System, Test, Traits, Veins, Voice

**Yesterday's Answer: Passengers**

**Treasury 7** Send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 postage and handling each ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Universal Uclick, Attn: Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480 Order online at upuzzles.com.

# CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution:
Engagement ring

## FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/ 24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/ students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.


**QQ RENT A CAR**
Starting as low as... **$25.00**
**Call: 233-9889 or 483-8866**
**$100 Security Deposit Required**
Please visit QQ Store Garapan (2nd Road behind Fire Station)


## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**Open Date:** Wednesday, December 23, 2009 **Close Date:** Friday, January 8, 2010

**JVA No. 10-005**

**Position:** Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Supervisor (Saipan)

**Salary:** Negotiable **Contract:** Two-year term

For more information about the position(s) being advertised, please stop by the Human Resources Office on the third floor of the Joeten Dandan Building.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A. Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 • Fax (670) 235-5131

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MAKE-A-WISH®
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Email: mawfguam@ite.net • www.wish.org
Office Hours: 8:30am-5:30pm, M-F daily
Saipan Tribune


## CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

*Saipan Tribune's* Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

*Saipan Tribune* also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

| ADS (7DAYS) | COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE) |
|---|---|
| • 3-Liner | $25 |
| • 5-Liner | $35 |
| • 3-Liner with picture | $45 |
| • 5-Liner with picture | $55 |

### ADVERTISING DEADLINE

**Classified Ads**

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

### CANCELLATION

**Classified Ads**

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

### REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

### CHECK YOUR ADS

*Saipan Tribune* will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

### ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| KIM CHANG SOOK and KIM JAE WON, Plaintiffs, -v- NOBUYUKI KUROSAWA AND AIOI INSURANCE COMPANY, LTD., Defendants. | ) ) ) ) ) ) ) | CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0473 |

**SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT, NOBUYUKI KUROSAWA:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LCC, the Plaintiffs Attorneys, whose address is P.O. Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared a signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to apear personally until further notice. If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above court:

/S/ Deputy Clerk of Court

DATED, this 11th day of December, 2009.


**DRUNK DRIVING**
***Over the limit. Under arrest.***


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# Jets end Colts' pursuit of perfection

**INDIANAPOLIS** (AP)—The Indianapolis Colts kept saying a perfect season didn't matter.

They meant it.

Coach Jim Caldwell pulled Peyton Manning and a handful of other starters for the previously unbeaten Colts in the third quarter, and the Jets took advantage by rallying for a 29-15 victory that ended the NFL's longest regular-season winning streak at 23 games.

With Manning on the sideline, helmet on and standing next to his offensive coordinator, the Colts (14-1) lost for the first time since Oct. 27, 2008, at Tennessee, ending a franchise-record 13-game winning streak at home.

"Until any player in here is the head coach, you follow orders and you follow them with all of your heart," Manning said. "That's what we've done as players. We follow orders. Our orders were not to give up a turnover, not to give up a kick return for a touchdown. There's not many games, under any circumstances that you win, when you have turnovers and give up a kick return for a touchdown."

The Jets (8-7) took control of their playoff destiny with the victory, and would make the postseason for the first time since 2006 with a win next week at home against AFC North champion Cincinnati.

Caldwell made the move to sit Manning & Co. after taking a 15-10 lead with 5:36 left in the third quarter, focused on a Super Bowl run rather than regular-season perfection. But to the fans at Lucas Oil Stadium, who wanted to send players to Buffalo with a chance to match New England's perfect 2007 regular season, it clearly mattered.

"Indianapolis earned the right to do whatever they want," Jets coach Rex Ryan said. "That's a heck of a football team. We were just going to line up and play, one way or the other. Whoever was in a Colts uniform was who we were going to play against."

Don Shula's 1972 Miami Dolphins remained the only NFL team to go an entire season undefeated.

"While the Jets' win today ended Indianapolis' streak and showed once again how difficult it is to go undefeated, I want to congratulate the Colts on a great run," Shula said. "Peyton Manning proved once again this season why he is one of the best quarterbacks in the history of the NFL and it was certainly no surprise to see him lead the Colts to an NFL-record 23 straight victories."

On the second series the starters sat out, fans started booing. The boos grew louder with each play, reaching a crescendo when Manning's replacement, Curtis Painter, was hit by Calvin Pace while setting to throw and lost the ball. Jets defensive end Marques Douglas fell on it and rolled into the end zone for the go-ahead score with 1:29 left in the third quarter.

"It was an unfortunate situation, he hit me right at the right time to force the fumble," said Painter, who added that the booing didn't bother him.

With Manning, Reggie Wayne, Dallas Clark and Joseph Addai out, that was all the Jets needed to take over.

New York sealed it with two fourth-quarter scores—a 43-yard field goal from Jay Feely and a 1-yard TD run from Thomas Jones.

As the clock wound down, some fans were silent and many left. Those who stayed booed as players shook hands, an odd way to end the record-setting 23-game streak.

"I'm disappointed," Manning said. "There were some chances, I think, to do some things better out there. The turnover and the kickoff return, those are plays that we haven't given up this year and when you do, it's hard to win. So we've got some things to get corrected and that will be the plan starting tomorrow."

The Colts' downfall began at the start of the second half when Brad Smith fielded Pat McAfee's kick 6 yards into the end zone, ran it out, found a seam along the right side and then raced down the sidelines. He even managed to stay in bounds after getting hit at about the Colts 20, going 106 yards to give the Jets a 10-9 lead.

It was the longest return in Jets history and tied for the second-longest win NFL history with three others. Only Ellis Hobbs' 108-yard kickoff return against the Jets in 2007 was longer.

But the Colts came right back. They moved 81 yards, the last coming when Donald Brown bounced off two Jets defenders and scooted into the end zone to make it 15-10 with 10:13 left in the third quarter. Brown's conversion run failed.

Then the Colts key offensive starters all left and New York pounced.

Painter lost the ball on first-and-10 from his own 20 and when Douglas recovered it for the score, the Jets had the lead. Mark Sanchez then hooked up with Dustin Keller on a 2-point conversion to make it 18-15.

And suddenly, the Colts winning streak was in jeopardy.

"It was the plan, the organizational philosophy that we were going with," Manning said, "and, as players, we support that."

AP

New York Jets running back Thomas Jones, left, is pushed out of bounds by Indianapolis Colts cornerback Jamie Silva in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game in Indianapolis, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009.

## Patriots 35, Jaguars 7

At Foxborough, Massachusetts, Tom Brady threw four touchdown passes, three to Randy Moss, and the young defense put together its third straight solid game, clinching the American Football Conference East and further dimming the Jaguars' slim postseason chances.

For the Patriots (10-5), it was another encouraging outing in what had been an inconsistent season. They took the division after missing the playoffs last season for the first time since 2002 despite an 11-5 record.

## Bengals 17, Chiefs 10

At Cincinnati, Carson Palmer's touchdown pass to Chad Ochocinco completed a 98-yard drive in the closing minutes, sending Cincinnati to the AFC North championship at the end of a rough week.

The Bengals (10-5) moved into the playoffs for only the second time in the past 19 years after dealing with the death of receiver Chris Henry.

## Packers 48, Seahawks 10

At Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Packers are going back to the playoffs, forcing four interceptions by Matt Hasselbeck, then getting a big boost from the Carolina Panthers.

Sunday's victory, combined with the New York Giants' blowout loss to Carolina, put the Packers (10-5) back in the postseason after going 6-10 last season and getting off to a disappointing 4-4 start this year.

## Cowboys 17, Redskins 0

At Landover, Maryland, the Dallas Cowboys returned to the playoffs, dominating their 100th meeting with Washington and setting up an NFC East title showdown with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Tony Romo threw for 286 yards, Jason Witten had a career-long 69-yard reception to set up a score, and the defense pitched the rivalry's first shutout in six years. After starting 0-2 this month, Dallas recovered to win back-to-back December games for first time since 2003.

## Panthers 41, Giants 9

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Matt Moore and the Panthers turned the Giants' farewell to Giants Stadium into one of their ugliest moments in franchise history.

Playing in front of Lawrence Taylor—possibly their greatest player—and knowing they still had a shot at a fifth straight playoff berth, the Giants (8-7) embarrassed themselves against the Panthers, a team with nothing at stake. Moore threw three touchdown passes, Jonathan Stewart rushed for a career-best 206 yards and the Panthers (7-8) shredded New York's defense with scores on six of their first seven possessions before a disgusted final sellout crowd Sunday.

## Eagles 30, Broncos 27

At Philadelphia, David Akers kicked a 28-yard field goal with 4 seconds remaining, lifting Philadelphia over Denver.

Kyle Orton rallied the Broncos from a 27-10 deficit in the third quarter, but Donovan McNabb led the Eagles on a winning drive in the final minutes.

The Broncos (8-7) are trying to avoid a major collapse after starting 6-0. They are tied with four other teams for the final two wild-card spots in the AFC and do not control their chances.

## Steelers 23, Ravens 20

At Pittsburgh, Jeff Reed's 38-yard field goal put Pittsburgh ahead with 5:25 remaining and the Steelers finally managed to hold a fourth-quarter lead to remain in playoff contention and further jumble the AFC postseason race.

The Steelers (8-7), their season seemingly ended by a late-season five-game losing streak, won their second in a row. They go into the final weekend with a chance to sneak into the playoffs if they win at Miami and get some help.

## Buccaneers 20, Saints 17

At New Orleans, Carnell Williams had 129 yards rushing and Connor Barth kicked a 47-yard field goal in overtime, lifting the Buccaneers to a stunning victory that prevented New Orleans from securing home-field advantage throughout the National Football Conference playoffs.

New Orleans was heavily favored, but instead dropped a second straight game at home after opening the season 13-0.

## Texans 27, Dolphins 20

At Miami, Houston raced to an early 27-point lead, then held on to remain in the AFC playoff scramble.

The Texans (8-7) scored on their first five possessions and won despite being outscored 20-0 in the final 31 minutes. Houston kept alive its slim hopes of making the playoffs for the first time, while defending AFC East champion Miami (7-8) was all but eliminated.

## Cardinals 31, Rams 10

At Glendale, Arizona, Kurt Warner threw for 196 of his 313 yards in the second quarter as the Cardinals beat the Rams for the seventh time in a row.

The Cardinals (10-5) reached 10 regular-season wins for the first time since 1976, 12 years before the franchise moved from St. Louis to Arizona.

## 49ers 20, Lions 6

At San Francisco, Frank Gore scored on a 1-yard run and topped the 1,000-yard mark for the fourth straight year as San Francisco closed out the home season with a victory over Detroit.

Alex Smith threw a touchdown pass to Vernon Davis and the Niners (7-8) forced six turnovers.

San Francisco was eliminated from playoff contention with a loss last week at Philadelphia, but still can end its string of six losing seasons by winning at St. Louis.

## Falcons 31, Bills 3

At Atlanta, Matt Ryan threw three touchdown passes, including a 42-yarder to Roddy White on Atlanta's first play from scrimmage as Atlanta downed Buffalo.

The victory left the Falcons (8-7) in position to post back-to-back winning records for the first time in franchise history. The Falcons, in their 44th season and eliminated from the playoff chase last week, close at Tampa Bay.

Ryan was 18 of 35 passing for 250 yards. He is 13-1 as the starter at the Georgia Dome in his two seasons.

## Browns 23, Raiders 9

At Cleveland, Jerome Harrison had 148 yards rushing as Cleveland won its third straight, extending a surprising streak that Eric Mangini can use to strengthen his case to Mike Holmgren that he deserves to remain coach.

With consecutive wins over Pittsburgh, Kansas City and Oakland, the Browns (4-11) have their first three-game winning streak since 2007 and only their third since 1999. Holmgren, expected to be introduced as Cleveland's team president this week, may have to factor Cleveland's late-season surge into whether he retains Mangini, once given little chance of staying after a 1-11 start.

# Baron's buzzer-beater leads Clips past Celtics

**LOS ANGELES** (AP)—Baron Davis hit a long fallaway jumper at the buzzer, and the Los Angeles Clippers dramatically snapped the Boston Celtics' nine-game road winning streak with a 92-90 victory on Sunday night.

Rajon Rondo scored 20 points for the Celtics, but missed two potential go-ahead free throws—actually three, including another that was waved off—with 1.5 seconds left in just the Celtics' second loss in 16 games.

Davis had 24 points and 13 assists for the Clippers, who snapped a three-game losing streak when Davis took an inbounds pass with a second left, pivoted and jumped backward for a perfect 22-footer. The shot gave Los Angeles its only lead of the second half.

Rasual Butler hit a dramatic tying 3-pointer off a drive-and-dish pass from Davis with 8.5 seconds left.

Kevin Garnett had 12 points and eight rebounds while playing mostly on the perimeter with a sore back for the Celtics, whose three-game winning streak ended two days after their impressive Christmas victory over the Orlando Magic. Boston manged just two points in the final 3:30 of its second straight road loss to the Clippers, who got 27 points and 12 rebounds from Chris Kaman.

Ray Allen scored 13 points for the Celtics, who played without injured star Paul Pierce for the second straight game. The Celtics hadn't lost on the road since Nov. 14 at Indiana.

The loss also left the Lakers alone atop the overall NBA standings at 24-5.

Eric Gordon scored 15 points for the Clippers, who narrowly avoided dropping a season-worst six games below .500 with a thrilling comeback in front of their first sellout crowd of the season. Staples Center was filled with a large percentage of Boston fans, yet the home team rebounded from its worst loss of the season in Phoenix on Friday with a stellar finish.

AP

Los Angeles Clippers' Baron Davis hits the game winning shot while being guarded by Boston Celtics' Rajon Rondo and Ray Allen to defeat the Celtics 92-90 in an NBA basketball game on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009, in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles trimmed the Celtics' lead to two points in the final four minutes, but wasted two chances to tie it on Gordon's traveling violation and Davis' turnover in the paint. DeAndre Jordan also badly missed two free throws with 1:34 to play, but the Celtics did nothing on the offensive end.

In the final seconds, Davis drove the lane and dished to Butler for a wide-open tying 3-pointer. Rondo then blew past Davis, who clearly hacked him on the arm during a layup attempt. The game clock expired during the play, but officials put 1.5 seconds back on the clock after video review.

Rondo missed the first free throw off the back of the rim, and he then missed another shot long—but the officials waved it off, saying the other players weren't set in their lanes. Given a third chance, Rondo still couldn't connect, clanging his shot in and out.

Boston coach Doc Rivers doesn't expect Pierce to join the Celtics on their four-game road trip, keeping him home to rest his infected right knee. Rivers said the Los Angeles native's condition fluctuates, and nobody is certain whether Pierce will play even when the Celtics return home.

Marcus Camby was inactive for the Clippers after aggravating his hyperextended left knee in their Christmas night loss at Phoenix. Coach Mike Dunleavy isn't certain when he'll be back.

### Heat 114, Pacers 80

At Miami, Dwyane Wade scored 25 points in only 28 minutes, Jermaine O'Neal added 19 points on 6 of 7 shooting against his former team and the Miami Heat enjoyed their largest victory margin this season by topping the Indiana Pacers.

Michael Beasley scored 16 points and Udonis Haslem added 13 for Miami, 5-1 in its last six games. The Heat started 8 of 8 from the field for a 17-3 lead and never looked back, building a 66-44 advantage that was their largest at halftime since January 2007.

Troy Murphy scored 16 for Indiana, which dropped its sixth straight. It could have been so much worse for the Pacers, too—they actually outscored Miami 14-0 during one first-half stretch, a brief blip in what was otherwise a Miami romp.

### Spurs 95, Knicks 85

At New York, Tony Parker scored 22 points, Manu Ginobili added 17, and the duo made the key plays in the final minutes to power San Antonio to a victory over New York.

Tim Duncan finished with 13 points while being outplayed by David Lee, but Parker and Ginobili combined for all of San Antonio's points after the game was tied at 84 with under 3Ω minutes remaining. The Spurs won for the eighth time in 10 games following a three-game skid earlier this month.

Lee matched a season high with 28 points on 11-of-13 shooting and grabbed 10 rebounds, but the Knicks finished 3-2 on their five-game homestand after losing the last two. Danilo Gallinari and Al Harrington each scored 19.

### Cavaliers 108, Rockets 83

At Cleveland, LeBron James scored 29 points and Mo Williams added 20 points as Cleveland used a flurry of 3-pointers and a stifling defense for their ninth win in 10 games.

James and Williams combined to make five 3-pointers in less than three minutes early in the third quarter, stretching Cleveland's lead to 68-53. The margin didn't dip below 15 the rest of the way.

Shaquille O'Neal had 13 points and 11 rebounds, for the Cavaliers (24-8), who have won four straight.

Aaron Brooks had 23 points for Houston, but only five in the second half, for Houston (18-13), which scored a season-low 83 points.

### Raptors 102, Pistons 95

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 25 points and 16 rebounds, and Jarrett Jack scored 17 points as Toronto extended its winning streak to a season-high four games.

Even with Richard Hamilton, Tayshaun Prince and Ben Gordon all back in the lineup, the Pistons couldn't stop their losing streak from reaching seven games. Detroit has not topped 100 points in any of those defeats.

Hamilton and Gordon each scored 15 and Jonas Jerebko and Rodney Stuckey both had 14 for the Pistons. Ben Wallace had 10 points and nine rebounds.

### Mavericks 104, Nuggets 96

At Denver, Drew Gooden scored 19 points and Dirk Nowitzki hit a vital 3-pointer late in the game as Dallas handed Denver its second loss at home this season.

Dallas snapped a five-game regular-season slide against Denver.

Gooden was back in the lineup after missing a game with back spasms. The forward also had 10 rebounds. Nowitzki added 13 points and 11 rebounds.

Denver was led in scoring by Kenyon Martin with 18 points. He also had 11 rebounds. Carmelo Anthony was held to 16 points, well below his league-leading average of 30.4 entering the game.

# Meyer expects to be leading Gators in '10

**NEW ORLEANS** (AP)—It took an emotional team meeting, a sleepless night and about an hour of practice for coach Urban Meyer to change his mind about resigning at Florida.

With his health and his family still major concerns, Meyer withdrew his resignation Sunday and decided instead to take an indefinite leave of absence. He will coach the fifth-ranked Gators in the Sugar Bowl against No. 4 Cincinnati on Jan. 1, then take some time off in hopes of alleviating recurring chest pains.

His announcement capped a wild and weird two days for Florida. He stunned college football twice in a 20-hour span, first by saying he planned to walk away from coaching and then by revealing he expects to be back on the sideline next season.

"I do in my gut believe that will happen," Meyer said.

Flanked by athletic director Jeremy Foley and quarterback Tim Tebow, the 45-year-old Meyer stoically responded to repeated questions about his health, his heart and his head. With his wife and three children seated a few feet in front of him, Meyer declined to reveal much detail about his condition.

He acknowledged the possibility he might need a procedure to alleviate chest pains that started four years ago, but would not say if he had a heart condition. He insisted he didn't have a heart attack and refused to say whether doctors told him he needed to step away.

"I'd rather not get into that," he said.

This much he made clear: His players prompted the about-face.

First, he witnessed their tearful reaction to his resignation Saturday evening. Then he spent a few hours with them on the practice field Sunday morning.

"It's very simple," Meyer said. "The love that I have for these players, I think that's well documented. Maybe one of the issues that I deal with is that I care so deeply about each individual. ... We've had a heck of a run, a run that we're very proud of. And when I sat back and watched those young guys go at it today and our coaching staff and the program we've built, to not try would be not the right thing to do."

So Meyer called Foley from the practice field and told him he wanted to talk about taking a leave of absence—something school president Bernie Machen first mentioned earlier in the week. Foley and several assistant coaches also tried to persuade Meyer to take time off, but the coach thought it would be better for the program, his health and his family for him to get away for good.

He changed his mind in a hurry, even quicker than Florida basketball coach Billy Donovan did when he went through a similar ordeal in 2007. Donovan resigned to coach the NBA's Orlando Magic only to have a change of heart and return to Gainesville, Fla., a few days later.

Offensive coordinator Steve Addazio will run the team during Meyer's absence.

Meyer never wanted to leave. In fact, if he would have resigned, he was planning to stay in close contact with the program, and getting back on the practice field made him realize he couldn't walk away for good.

# Deadline nears for Pacquiao-Mayweather blood feud

BOXING

**LAS VEGAS, Nevada, United States**—Manny Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, gave Floyd Mayweather's camp a take-it-or-leave-it final offer Sunday and set a Monday deadline to settle a blood test feud and salvage a boxing extravaganza.

The final stumbling block to a March 13 showdown in Las Vegas that could be the biggest moneymaker in boxing history are demands for blood doping tests, something Mayweather says are vital to ensuring a fair fight.

Unbeaten U.S. star Mayweather has backed off demands for random blood tests at any time before the fight while Pacquiao, concerned blood tests will weaken him, wants none within 30 days of the fight until just after the bout.

Richard Schaefer, chief executive of Mayweather-backers Golden Boy Promotions, said no tests within 30 days of the fight would make the entire blood test program useless.

Arum's latest pitch is to have the matter decided by Nevada State Athletic Commission officials, with Sports Illustrated reporting Arum wants a special January 19 hearing on the matter.

AP

Referee Kenny Bayless, center rear, directs Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, right, to his corner after knocking down Miguel Cotto, of Puerto Rico, in the fourth round of their WBO welterweight boxing title fight, in this Nov. 14, 2009 file photo, in Las Vegas.

With the commission standards and state law mandating urine testing only and no protocols for blood tests established, the panel could throw out any blood testing, a deal-breaking possibility Mayweather's side knows all too well.

"We'll go along with what the Nevada commission decides," Arum said. "We want this fight to go forward."

Arum said that if Mayweather's camp does not agree to allow Nevada officials to decide when and how to conduct blood tests, he will sign a deal for Filipino hero Pacquiao to face Paulie Malignaggi on March 13.

Pacquiao has said he will file a defamation lawsuit against Mayweather for accusing him of taking performance-enhancing drugs.

Each side has pegged the other as trying to avoid the fight so they do not have to face the other. ***(PDI)***

## ADVANCE

*From Page 28*

the first half, Noni Saipan seized control of the game in the third period behind the trio of Wowie Abuel, Bon Tamayo, and Kae Bernardo. Bernardo scored eight points in the third canto, Abuel chipped in seven, and Tamayo hit back-to-back treys to end that period with Noni in front, 60-51.

Abuel canned two more triples, while Tamayo logged eight more points in the final canto to lift Noni to a five-point win.

Abuel top-scored for Noni with 24 points, while Tamayo, who missed the team's previous two games, tallied 18 in his return.

Noni's victory created a three-way tie for third place with Prospects and Diamond Auto Fixers joining the logjam.

### First Game

**Advance 99** – Estolas 22, Talania 18, Guiab 18, Fitial 16, Factor 13, Gapor 12.

**Cholos 78** – Jung 18, Lizama 17, Itibus 17, Baculod 13, Coldeen 7, Aranda 4, George 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 25-23, 52-35, 75-52, 99-78.

**Noni Saipan 83** – Abuel 24, Tamayo 18, Bernardo 17, De Vero 12, Demapan 8, Basila 3, Pantaleon 3.

**Diamond Fixers 78** – Esdrelon 24, Barrios 14, Mercurio 13, Berline 12, M. Capalad 8, Artates 7.

**Scoring by quarters:** 18-21, 37-39, 60-51, 83-78.

## ISLAND

*From Page 28*

keep their perfect record (4-0) and regain the solo lead in the 21-team field.

### Chura 23, Ramblers 13

Chura also wrapped up its game early, winning over the Ramblers in six innings via a 10-run mercy rule, 23-13.

Chura scored six runs apiece in the third and fourth inning, turning a 9-7 lead to a 21-10 advantage. Pitcher Mel Sakisat then recorded four strikeouts in the last two innings to preserve the victory, Chura's third in four matches.

Ramblers dropped to a 1-3 record.

Sakisat led Chura's win, going 4-for-5 at the plate and nailing five RBIs. He, Ben Mesa, and Dave Camacho had one homer each.

### Freedom Air 13, Go for Broke 8

Freedom Air is back on track after beating Go for Broke in the fourth make-up game of the night, 13-8.

After a humiliating 8-20 loss to 6-Pack on Dec. 20, first baseman Chris Castro helped Freedom Air recover. Castro went only 1-for-3 at the plate, but his three-run homer at the top of the fifth inning gave Freedom Air more distance, 13-8, following 9-7 lead after four complete innings.

Ken Villagomez, Reno Celis, Mel Manahane, and Ray Kaipat also contributed to Freedom Air's cause, tallying two RBIs apiece.

Freedom Air improved to a 2-2 slate, while Go for Broke absorbed its third loss in four games.

### Man Amigos 20, Hitz 15

Man Amigos survived Hitz's rally to eke out a 20-15 win.

Benedict Saurez made the first grand slam of the season, driving three runners home with his homer at the top of the sixth inning to help Hitz tie the game, 15-all.

However, Man Amigos answered with back-to-back homers at the bottom of the sixth inning, courtesy of Jerry Ayuyus' two-run homer and Joey Dela Cruz's solo round-tripper to regain the lead, 20-15.

Man Amigos pegged the final score when they retired Hitz's first three batters at the top of the last inning.

## FANIANS

*From Page 28*

In the Final Four, Fanians will be the top seed and will duke it out with the fourth place team, while Kagman Projects is the second seed and will square off against the third place team.

The winner of the semifinals will then play in the best-of-five championship for the 2009-2010 World Organized Rocball Community League diadem.

Playoffs will start in January after the outdoor version of Rocball at the Pacific Islands Club set from Jan. 1 to 3, 2010.

In other Rocball news, three players earned Master Blaster status for the season—Ben Lisua and John Nekaifes of Soul Brothers and Myron Laniyo of No Mercy.

Feger said the trio distinguished themselves after registering all five of Rocball's heavy hitting, multiple-scoring techniques.

Laniyo went on to average 22 points in heavy hits per game. Ben Pelisamen of Ghasias Brothers, for his part, scored a whopping eight goals for the season, which translated to an average of a goal a game.

Feger said the 2009-2010 season is also memorable beacause of how well Kagman Projects players have adopted to Rocball rules.

Kagman Projects are made up of volleyball players that helped Kagman High School win the inter-scholastic volleyball championship.

"The first-year Rocball players have learned well the rules of Saipan's indigenous sport and in the process stunned players and teams with their amazing come-from-behind victories and overtime wins," he said

The Rocball SandBlaster Tournament will usher in the sport in 2010 and Feger is inviting Rocball and volleyball players alike for the competition.

There will be no entrance fee in the SandBlaster Tournament for teams that have at least one registered Rocball player. But those who don't have a Rocball player need to pony up $25. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA STANDINGS

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

**Atlantic Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boston | 23 | 6 | .793 | – |
| Toronto | 15 | 17 | .469 | 9 1/2 |
| New York | 11 | 19 | .367 | 12 1/2 |
| Philadelphia | 7 | 22 | .241 | 16 |
| New Jersey | 2 | 28 | .067 | 21 1/2 |

**Southeast Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Orlando | 22 | 8 | .733 | – |
| Atlanta | 21 | 8 | .724 | 1/2 |
| Miami | 16 | 12 | .571 | 5 |
| Charlotte | 11 | 17 | .393 | 10 |
| Washington | 10 | 18 | .357 | 11 |

**Central Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cleveland | 24 | 8 | .750 | – |
| Milwaukee | 12 | 16 | .429 | 10 |
| Chicago | 11 | 17 | .393 | 11 |
| Detroit | 11 | 19 | .367 | 12 |
| Indiana | 9 | 20 | .310 | 13 1/2 |

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

**Southwest Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dallas | 22 | 9 | .710 | – |
| San Antonio | 17 | 11 | .607 | 3 1/2 |
| Houston | 18 | 13 | .581 | 4 |
| New Orleans | 13 | 15 | .464 | 7 1/2 |
| Memphis | 13 | 16 | .448 | 8 |

**Northwest Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Denver | 20 | 11 | .645 | – |
| Portland | 20 | 12 | .625 | 1/2 |
| Utah | 17 | 13 | .567 | 2 1/2 |
| Oklahoma City | 15 | 14 | .517 | 4 |
| Minnesota | 7 | 24 | .226 | 13 |

**Pacific Division**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| L.A. Lakers | 24 | 5 | .828 | – |
| Phoenix | 19 | 12 | .613 | 6 |
| Sacramento | 13 | 16 | .448 | 11 |
| L.A. Clippers | 13 | 17 | .433 | 11 1/2 |
| Golden State | 8 | 21 | .276 | 16 |

**Yesterday's Games**

Toronto 102, Detroit 95
San Antonio 95, New York 88
Cleveland 108, Houston 83
Miami 114, Indiana 80
Dallas 104, Denver 96
L.A. Clippers 92, Boston 90

### NFL STANDINGS

**AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

**East**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-New England | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 400 | 251 |
| N.Y. Jets | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 311 | 236 |
| Miami | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 336 | 360 |
| Buffalo | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 228 | 319 |

**South**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Indianapolis | 14 | 1 | 0 | .933 | 409 | 277 |
| Houston | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 354 | 306 |
| Jacksonville | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 273 | 357 |
| Tennessee | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 337 | 389 |

**North**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Cincinnati | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 305 | 254 |
| Baltimore | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 370 | 248 |
| Pittsburgh | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 338 | 300 |
| Cleveland | 4 | 11 | 0 | .267 | 222 | 358 |

**West**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-San Diego | 12 | 3 | 0 | .800 | 431 | 300 |
| Denver | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 302 | 280 |
| Oakland | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 184 | 358 |
| Kansas City | 3 | 12 | 0 | .200 | 250 | 400 |

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**East**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| y-Philadelphia | 11 | 4 | 0 | .733 | 429 | 313 |
| y-Dallas | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 337 | 250 |
| N.Y. Giants | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 395 | 383 |
| Washington | 4 | 11 | 0 | .267 | 246 | 313 |

**South**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-New Orleans | 13 | 2 | 0 | .867 | 500 | 318 |
| Atlanta | 8 | 7 | 0 | .533 | 343 | 315 |
| Carolina | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 292 | 298 |
| Tampa Bay | 3 | 12 | 0 | .200 | 234 | 380 |

**North**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Minnesota | 11 | 3 | 0 | .786 | 396 | 269 |
| y-Green Bay | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 428 | 290 |
| Chicago | 5 | 9 | 0 | .357 | 254 | 322 |
| Detroit | 2 | 13 | 0 | .133 | 239 | 457 |

**West**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Arizona | 10 | 5 | 0 | .667 | 368 | 292 |
| San Francisco | 7 | 8 | 0 | .467 | 302 | 275 |
| Seattle | 5 | 10 | 0 | .333 | 267 | 373 |
| St. Louis | 1 | 14 | 0 | .067 | 169 | 408 |

**x-clinched division**
**y-clinched playoff spot**

**Yesterday's Games**

Atlanta 31, Buffalo 3
Houston 27, Miami 20
Green Bay 48, Seattle 10
Carolina 41, N.Y. Giants 9
Pittsburgh 23, Baltimore 20
Tampa Bay 20, New Orleans 17, OT
Cleveland 23, Oakland 9
Cincinnati 17, Kansas City 10
New England 35, Jacksonville 7
San Francisco 20, Detroit 6
Arizona 31, St. Louis 10
N.Y. Jets 29, Indianapolis 15
Philadelphia 30, Denver 27
Dallas 17, Washington 0

***BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS***

### LOCAL SCORES

**UBA STANDINGS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ol'Aces | 4 | 0 |
| Advance | 4 | 0 |
| Prospect | 2 | 2 |
| Diamond | 2 | 2 |
| Noni Saipan | 2 | 2 |
| Cholos | 1 | 3 |
| Hoopaholics | 1 | 3 |
| Trinity | 0 | 4 |

**BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Island Rebels | 4 | 0 |
| Natibu | 3 | 0 |
| SaiPal | 3 | 0 |
| Chura | 3 | 1 |
| Man Amigos | 3 | 1 |
| Ur Balls | 2 | 2 |
| San Roque | 2 | 1 |
| 6-Pack | 2 | 1 |
| Red Eye | 2 | 1 |
| Freedom Air Flyers | 2 | 2 |
| Blazers | 1 | 1 |
| Hitz | 1 | 2 |
| Team Familia | 1 | 2 |
| Lancheros | 1 | 2 |
| Berdax | 1 | 2 |
| Calikano-Falcons | 1 | 2 |
| Ramblers | 1 | 3 |
| Go For Broke | 1 | 3 |
| Team Fuegu | 1 | 3 |
| X-Terminators | 0 | 3 |
| G-Ballers | 0 | 3 |

## ROUSING

*From Page 28*

could earn was six points.

In other opening day results, RBC Badu and the Lady Hilitais won their first game in the boys' 11-and-under/girls'14-and-under division.

RBD Badu topped Hopwood Girls 1, 53-45, while the Lady Hilitais downed Hopwood Girls 2, 42-30.

In the other boys' 14-and-under/girls'18-and-under division, Rollers A trounced the Hilitai Boyz, 51-27.

The boys' 14-and-under/girls'18-and-under division has eight teams divided into two pools. Pool A is composed of MHS, Lil' Sonics, Rollers A, and Hilitai Boyz. Pool B has Mixed Plate, G-Stars, Rollers B, and CK Kings. The Top 2 teams in each pool will advance to the playoffs after a round-robin elimination.

There is also a competition in the boys' 18-and-under division and three games were scheduled on opening day.

The boys' 18-and-under division has the most entries with 11 teams divided into two pools. The G-Stars are seeded first in Pool A and are joined by Rollers A and C, HJHS Oldies, and Torch Bearers. Leading Pool B are newly crowned Rotary champions San Antonio Sixers. Also in Pool B are Southern Sonics, Hopwood LMA, Ol'Aces, Kagman Boys and Rollers B.

The G-Stars were scheduled to collide against Rollers A in the first game in the boys' 18-and-under division at 4pm yesterday. In the second match, the Sixers were to debut over the Southern Sonics, while the third game of the night was to feature Hopwood LMA against Ol'Aces. Results of these matches were unavailable at press time.

# 2009 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Sixers' Novo Pepito fakes off the defense of the G-Stars' Joseph Jung.

The Sixers' Chris Duenas, left, goes for a layup against the G-Stars' Joseph Jung.

The Sixers' Ernest Duenas pulls up for a jumper against the G-Stars' Marvin Rabauliman.

The Sixers' Ian Benavente (34) goes for a shot against the G-Stars' Marvin Rabauliman, right, and Clayton Kenty during their title match in the 2009 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League on Wednesday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The G-Stars' Joseph Jung embraces the ball after collaring the rebound.

The Chalan Kanoa Saints players receive their third place trophy.

Sixers coach Ray Duenas, center, and his two players flash the No. 1 sign after ruling the Rotary caging.

The G-Stars' Clayton Kenty dishes off to a teammate, as he is trapped by the Sixers' Nathan Flores at the baseline.

The G-Stars' Nate Mateo goes up for a running jumper against Sixers defenders.

Runner-up G-Stars pose with their trophy.

**Jets end Colts' pursuit of perfection**



The Indianapolis Colts kept saying a perfect season didn't matter.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

**Deadline nears for Pacquiao-Mayweather blood feud**

Manny Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, gave Floyd Mayweather's camp a take-it-or-leave-it final offer Sunday and set a Monday deadline to settle a blood test feud and salvage a boxing extravaganza.

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# Rousing start for Lil' Sonics

The Lil' Sonics Jack Aranda goes up for a shot against an MHS Lady Dolphins defender during their game in the 6th Annual Christmas Hoop Fest yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Lil' Sonics began their title defense with a bang, crushing Marianas High School, 85-28, in the boys' 14-and-under division of the 6th Annual Christmas Hoop Fest yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Lil' Sonics, who won the boys' 14-and-under crown last year after beating the San Antonio Sixers, 83-78, were simply too much for the MHS Lady Dolphins.

The MHS cagebelles are one of the only two teams entered in the girls' 18-and-under division, thus organizers decided to put them and Mixed Plate in the boys' 14-and-under bracket.

Despite having older players, the Lady Dolphins' skills were not as good as the Lil' Sonics. Coach Jesse Tudela's Lil' Sonics had the game as early in the first half when they led, 42-12.

John Paul Villanueva, Jack Aranda, Ric-ric Alegre, and Nico Salem joined forces for the Lil' Sonics rousing start. Alegre tallied 17 points, Aranda logged 16 markers, and Salem and Villanueva finished with 14 points each.

No Lady Dolphins scored in double figures, as the most Lalaine Pagarao

See ROUSING on Page 26

# Advance gains share of UBA lead

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Advance X-Terminators matched the longest winning streak so far in the 2009 UBA/ Miller Lite Men's Basketball League after whipping Cholos, 99-78, in a make-up game on Saturday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

The victory was Advance's fourth in as many games, tying Ol'Aces' feat and allowing X-Terminators to force a two-way tie for the lead in the eight-team league.

After leading by only a deuce at the end of the first period, 25-23, the X-Terminators turned on the heat in the second quarter to pull away with the 21-point win.

Every player Advance coach Marvin Deocares fielded in the second quarter managed to find their target, giving the X-Terminators a 52-35 halftime advantage.

It was cruise control for Advance since then, as they led by as much as 25 in the second half en route to an unbeaten record.

The X-Terminators' dominating performance produced six players scoring in double figures. Jun Estolas led the way with 22 markers, Brendon Talania and Junar Guiab chipped in 18, Kelvin Fitial added 16, and Leo Factor and Gil Gapor contributed 13 and 12, respectively.

Cholos, which had its two-game losing skid snapped on Dec. 16 after an 87-53 win over Trinity Estates, was back on the losing end, dropping to a 1-3 slate. Won Joo Jung paced Cholos with 18 points, while Pete Lizama and Maverick Itibus tallied 17 markers apiece.

In the second game, Noni Saipan gained its second win in four matches after outlasting Diamond Fixers, 83-78.

After trailing most of the way in

See ADVANCE on Page 26

Advance X-Terminators' Kelvin Fitial, seen here going for the rebound during their game against Prospects, scored 16 points in their win over Cholos in the UBA caging on Saturday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

# Fanians top regular season

Veteran team Fanians topped the regular season of the 2009-2010 World Organized Rocball Community League with a 6-1 win-loss record.

Rookie team Kagman Projects gave a good account of itself in its maiden year in Rocball, coming in at second place after the eliminations with a 5-2 record.

Third place was a two-way tie between One Way and No Mercy as they both finished with identical 4-3 cards.

Ghasias Brothers, Soul Rebels, and Islanders, meanwhile, crowd themselves in fourth place with their 3-4 slates.

Rocball creator James Feger said only Fanians and Kagman Projects have slotted themselves for the playoffs with One Way and No Mercy needing a play-in game to determine third place.

The loser will then take on Ghasias Brothers with the winner playing the victor of the Soul Brothers-Islanders encounter for the fourth and final playoff spot.

See FANIANS on Page 26

# Island Rebels retake solo lead

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Island Rebels saved the best for last, scoring 10 runs in the fifth inning to rout Ur Balls, 21-8, during a make-up game in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League on Saturday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Only three runs separated Island Rebels and Ur Balls after four complete innings when the former had a 10-run top of the fifth to put more pressure to the latter in the last inning.

Shortstop Toi Celis led Island Rebels' breakaway in the fifth inning, hitting a three-run homer. He went 3-for-4 at bat, scored three runs, and had four RBIs.

At the bottom of the fifth, the best that Ur Balls could do was reach third base and Island Rebels pitcher Craig Sanchez ended the game after striking out Marvin Kaipat.

Island Rebels leftfielder Byron Kaipat and catcher Marvin Palacios had three RBIs each with the former going 3-for-4 at the plate and the latter posting 2-for-3.

The victory allowed Island Rebels to

See ISLAND on Page 26

Mel Sakisat pitches for Chura, which downed Ramblers, 23-13, during their game in the Chamolinian softball league on Saturday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO